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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ORGANIZATIONAL BUYING OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

by

LORRAINE ROMANK

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

FACULTY OF HOME ECONOMICS

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Supervisor

.....

N. Fetterman

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Date August 31, 1982

Abstract

Organizational Buying of Textile Products

for Public Buildings

by

Lorraine Romank, Master of Science

University of Alberta, 1982

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth Crown

Faculty of Home Economics

Department: Clothing and Textiles

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine buying decisions made in organizations which purchase textile products for use in public buildings. The Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior was the conceptual framework for the study; the decision process comprised the main focus, with emphasis on evaluative criteria and information search. Personal interviews were conducted with 29 individuals within 20 organizations located in Edmonton, Alberta. The analysis was limited to a descriptive one.

Buying centers differed among organizations and members played various roles during specific stages. Evaluative criteria varied for both type of product and organization. Of the types of information sought by respondents, personal-commercial sources were found to be the most helpful. Factors which influenced the decision and problems specific to this selection were also examined.

It was concluded that members of the buying center do experience problems in selecting textile products for public buildings and that difficulty in understanding government regulations may play a role. Further research and recommendations are suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Increasing demands by users of textile products have prompted tremendous technological advancements in the textile industry over the past several years. As a result, many textile products are available in today's marketplace. With more products available, a greater number of decisions must be made during the purchasing process, both by individual consumers and by organizations.

To aid in public safety and protection, standards for textile products have been developed by government and private agencies. Although such standards make buying decisions somewhat easier, such decisions still remain a difficult task, especially for individuals not familiar with specific products and regulations.

Statement of the Problem

This exploratory study was designed to examine buying decisions made in organizations which purchase textile products for use in public buildings. The study identified the individuals who were involved in the decision process for a specific buying situation and examined major factors which influenced their decision-making behavior. This investigation revealed the importance of textile flammability and serviceability as evaluative criteria to organizational buyers of textile products, as well as the information seeking behavior of such buyers. The research also revealed problems organizations experience when buying textile products for public buildings and shed some light on ways to minimize these problems.

Justification

Some knowledge exists in the field of consumer buying behavior with regard to textile products. Attitudes toward serviceability criteria, for example, have been explored by researchers in Clothing and Textiles. However, research in the area of organizational buying behavior with respect to textile products is new and empirical studies are lacking.

Several different government standards and regulations for textile products for public buildings exist in Canada, and organizations buying these products must be assured of compliance with regulations such as those on flammability. Yet many organizational buyers or specifiers of such products are experiencing problems understanding and complying with these regulations. Such problems in turn lead to difficulties in the decision process. As a result, requests for such textile information are frequently addressed to the Textile Analysis Service at the University of Alberta, from individuals buying textile products for public buildings.

In order to determine the kinds of problems organizational buyers or specifiers experience, what factors influence their decisions, and how important they consider flammability and serviceability of textile products, it is necessary to examine the organizational buying or decision process itself.

The knowledge gained from this research should aid both government and private agencies in communicating pertinent information to organizational members responsible for buying textiles for public buildings. In addition, an empirical study of this nature may fill some of the gaps in the existing knowledge about organizational

buying behavior by focusing on a specific product, buying situation, and sample to clarify or validate existing theory.

Objectives

The objectives of this exploratory study refer to the buying of textiles for public buildings and are as follows:

1. To identify, by title, the individuals in the buying center in each of the organizations and to classify these individuals using role descriptors.
2. To clarify the decision stages for each buying situation and to identify, by role(s), which individuals are involved at each stage.
3. To determine the evaluative criteria considered important for product selection by the buying center; and more specifically to determine the importance of flammability and serviceability aspects relative to other evaluative criteria.
4. To determine what types of information the buying center sought most often for each class of product and buying situation, and the importance of each type.
5. To determine sources of information the buying center would consider most helpful and which sources were actually used in purchasing textile products in each buying situation.

6. To determine what factors influenced search behavior, specifically the evaluative criteria considered important, and to categorize these as organizational, environmental, interpersonal, or individual influences.
7. To determine specific problems that arose when buying textile products for public buildings.

Definitions

1. Textile products (class of product) - For the purpose of this study, textile products used in public buildings included carpeting, textile window treatments and furnishings made with textile components.
2. Public building - building to which the public is admitted. Operationally, public buildings for this study included buildings with the following occupancies:

   - Assembly occupancy - use of a building for civic, political, travel, social, educational, recreational, or like purposes, or for the consumption of food or drink.
   - Institutional occupancy - use of a building by those persons requiring special care or treatment.
   - Business and personal services occupancy - use of a building for the transaction of business or the rendering or receiving of professional or personal services.

   (adapted from The National Building Code of Canada, 1980)

3. Organizational buying behavior -

> "Organizational buying behavior is defined as the decision-making process by which formal organizations establish the need for purchased products and services, and identify, evaluate, and choose among alternative brands and suppliers" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 2).

4. Organizational buying decision process - The decision process includes information acquisition and processing activities, as well as choice processes and the development of goals and other criteria to be used in choosing among alternatives (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 2).

> "The organizational buying decision can be described in terms of a general model of organizational decision processes composed of five basic stages ...
>
> - identification of need
> - establishing objectives and specifications
> - identifying buying alternatives
> - evaluating alternative buying actions
> - selecting the supplier"
>
> (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 31).

5. The buying center - "All those individuals and groups who participate in the purchasing decision-making process, who share some common goals and the risks arising from the decisions" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 6). This is operationally defined as any person named by the initial contact or other person in an organization as someone involved in the buying decision process.

6. Roles of individuals in the buying center -

> "There are several distinct roles in the buying center: users, influencers, buyers, deciders, and gatekeepers. ... It is quite likely that several individuals will occupy the same role within the buying center (e.g., there may be several users) and that one individual may occupy two or more roles (e.g., buyer and gatekeeper). All members of the buying center can

be seen as influencers, but not all influencers occupy other roles" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 77).

A more detailed description of each role is provided by Webster and Wind (1972b):

> "USERS - those members of the organization who use the purchased products and services.
> BUYERS - those with formal responsibility and authority for contracting with suppliers.
> INFLUENCERS - those who influence the decision process directly or indirectly by providing information and criteria for evaluating alternative buying actions.
> DECIDERS - those with final authority to choose among alternative buying actions.
> GATEKEEPERS - those who control the flow of information (and materials) into the buying center " (p. 17).

Operationally, a role was assigned to the respondent by the researcher and where applicable, was based partially on a referral by another member of the buying center.

7. Factors influencing buying decisions - Buying decisions are influenced by many factors which can be categorized as individual, interpersonal, organizational, or environmental. Each factor is briefly described as follows:

> "INDIVIDUAL characteristics of these members, including personality, motivation, cognitive structure, learning process, interaction with the environment, preference structure, and decision processes.
>
> INTERPERSONAL relationships among the members of the buying center (users, influencers, deciders, buyers, and gatekeepers), including both task (relating to the specific buying problem) and non-task activities, interactions and sentiments of the group members, group task structure, and leadership patterns.

ORGANIZATIONAL characteristics, including the buying and organizational task, structure (the communication, authority, status, and reward systems), technology, and personnel.

ENVIRONMENTAL factors, including the physical, technological, economic, political, legal, and cultural environment as it affects the values and norms, the availability of goods and services, general business conditions, and marketing information"

(Webster & Wind, 1972a, p. 11).

Operationally, the researcher categorized these influences from descriptions given by respondents.

8. Buying situation - Three types of buying situations generally exist and are described as follows:

New task buying situations are new experiences in which the buyer has very little or no past experience to depend on. A great amount of information is needed and new alternatives must be considered.

Straight rebuy situations are continuing or recurring in nature, thus not requiring new information since the buyer has adequate experience. It is unnecessary to consider new alternatives.

Modified rebuy situations are those in which buyers feel they may benefit from a re-evaluation of alternatives. The buyers have some buying experience but in searching for additional information they may find new alternatives to consider. (Robinson, Faris & Wind, 1967)

9. Evaluative criteria - refers to the specifications or attributes that organizational buyers use in identifying and comparing alternative textile products purchased for public buildings.

10. Serviceability of textiles - is a reflection of how well a textile product meets the user's expectations in a given end use. It is arrived at by weighing and balancing various concepts: durability, comfort, safety, care, and aesthetics. The importance placed on each concept varies with the end use and with personal preferences and expectations.

11. Types of information - refers to information that buyers will search for when past experience is not sufficient. Examples include price, fiber content, construction or workmanship, flame resistance and durability.

12. Sources of information - types of communication channels through which an individual gains information regarding textile products. Sources will be classified as follows:

Personal-Commercial	i.e., salespeople distributors trade shows
Interpersonal-Commercial	i.e., advertising catalogues direct mail telephone yellow pages
Personal-Non-Commercial	i.e., consultants textile consultants government agency personnel employees of other companies fellow employees

Impersonal-Non-Commercial i.e., technical journals
government
publications
trade publications

(adapted from Webster, 1979, p. 115)

13. Most helpful sources of information - those sources perceived by respondents to provide the required information regarding the textile product to the buying center member.

Scope of the Study

Organizations chosen for the sample either were in the process of buying, or had purchased within the past six months, textile products for public buildings.

Assumptions

It was assumed that individuals currently or recently involved in the buying of textile products for public buildings had adequate memory recall as to the buying process and influencing factors.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into three sections. The first is a description of different approaches to the study of organizational buying behavior. The second section is a summary of the literature on the buying center, the organizational buying decision process, and factors affecting this process. The third section is a brief overview of governmental standards or regulations for textiles used in public buildings.

Although there is an appreciable amount of research and knowledge about organizational buyer behavior, it exists mainly either in the form of academic model formation or as practice-oriented research done by private firms, and therefore not available for public use. There remains a paucity of empirical studies on organizational buying behavior and what little literature does exist often describes studies carried out in the industrial sector.

Approaches to the Study of Organizational Buying Behavior

The concept of organizational buying is a complex one of dynamic nature, involving interaction among several individuals, in a formal setting. Over the past fifteen years, several comprehensive models have been developed in the area of organizational buying behavior. Prior to the development of these macro models, researchers borrowed from existing techniques and methodology used in consumer behavior research to study this concept. A synthesis of knowledge from interdisciplinary areas such as psychology, sociology, organizational

theory and related behavioral sciences has resulted in comprehensive models such as those developed by Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967), Sheth (1973), and Webster and Wind (1972). These general models provide a basic framework for describing and explaining factors affecting the organizational buying process.

More recent research has focused on social influence (Bonoma and Zaltman, 1978) and buyer-seller interaction (Bonoma, Bagozzi and Zaltman, 1978; Sheth, 1975; Wilson, 1977). For the purpose of this study, the general models previously described are thought to be more appropriate and will subsequently be described.

Models of Organizational Buying Behavior

The Robinson, Faris and Wind Model

Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967), after studying three distinct firms in the United States for two years, proposed the BUY-GRID Model of organizational buying behavior. Although they specifically investigated industrial buyer behavior, the authors of this model suggest that it may also be useful in analyzing consumer or individual behavior within any organizational setting.

The study examined the decision process and behavior of the industrial buyer through eight phases of the procurement process. Differences among buying situations (buy classes) were considered and their effects on the decision-making process were described. Combination of buy phases with buy classes allowed development of a matrix known as the Buy-Grid model. It should be noted that not all phases in the model are necessary to describe every buying situation

and that some phases are omitted, as in the case of a straight rebuy situation.

The Robinson, Faris and Wind model is general enough to examine all procurements, yet may be specific enough to be operational. Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967) concluded that the decision process in a procurement situation is dependent upon the specific industry, the product being purchased, environmental influences and the organization itself.

The Sheth Model

This model of organizational buying behavior was specifically developed by Sheth (1973) to explain industrial buying decisions. However, he suggested that the model is also applicable to other types of organizations. Sheth conceptualized the buying center, within an organization, as consisting of four groups: purchasing agents, engineers, users and others. This limited view of the buying center is perhaps due to the industrial manufacturing focus of his model.

Sheth's model of organizational buying behavior consists of three distinct aspects: (1) the psychological and social world of the individuals involved in the procurement decisions, (2) conditions which may prompt joint decisions among these individuals, and (3) the process of joint decision-making and conflict resolution tactics. Although he included situational and organizational factors, no direct reference was made to interorganizational influences.

The Webster and Wind Model

Webster and Wind (1972) conceptualized the "buying center" as those members involved in the purchasing process which takes place over a period of time. Sheth's (1973) model, in comparison, limits the buying center to four functional groups. The buying center in Webster and Wind's model consists of five buying roles - user, influencer, decider, buyer and gatekeeper. This concept allows the researcher to look beyond titles such as the 'purchasing agent', and to draw individuals involved in the buying process from organizations other than the one specifically sampled.

The decision process is condensed into five stages and the buying situations are borrowed from Robinson, Faris and Wind's (1967) buy classes. As well, the model organizes all factors which influence the decision process into four categories: (1) individual influences, (2) interpersonal or group influences, (3) organizational influences and (4) environmental influences. "Each of these four factors may influence the buying decisions through a set of variables relating to the 'task', and/or through a set of variables not directly related to the task at hand" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 28).

The Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior was used as the conceptual framework for this study. It remains one of the most comprehensive models available to researchers of the organizational buying process for all profit and non-profit organizations.

Since the study was exploratory in nature, a general, comprehensive model which identifies key variables was required. Although Webster and Wind's model lacks specific concepts which are

more recent to organizational behavior research (such as buyer-seller relationships) it is appropriate for the descriptive data that the researcher desired to obtain for this study. It provides a basic framework which can be used to empirically describe a specific situation. Since an exploratory approach was used, a general overview of the entire model was considered to be reasonable.

The Buying Center

In studying the organizational buying process, the individual purchasing agent, the buying center, the entire organization or the total market may be used as a unit of analysis (Nicosia & Wind, 1977a, p. 353). Studying only the purchasing agent, or even the purchasing department within an organization is generally not sufficient (Weigand, 1968). Buying or purchasing within an organizational setting is most often the result of collective decision-making and the purchasing agent, who may be the first contact, is not usually the sole decision-maker (Cyert, Simon & Trow, 1956; Harding, 1966; Webster & Wind, 1972). Nicosia and Wind (1977a) reinforced this statement by suggesting that the researcher "...must avoid interviewing only 'heads' of departments bearing the purchasing or some similar label" (p. 363). Who is involved in the decision process is of utmost importance and individuals composing the buying center may represent more than one particular firm.

Although past research has utilized the buying center concept to identify organizational members involved in a buying decision (Webster & Wind, 1972a), it has not been used as extensively as had been expected (Wind, 1978). Nicosia and Wind (1977) suggested

that current research should focus on the buying center since organizational buying behavior is a multi-person decision-making process. The buying center is thought to be an appropriate unit of analysis for this study.

More specifically, researchers may "include in the buying center only those individuals with major direct involvement in the given purchase decision" (Wind, 1978, p. 68). The purchasing agent may initially be contacted and asked to identify other organizational members who are involved in the decision process. If the other members are also asked the same question, this may increase reliability in the study (Wind, 1978).

Specific identification of the buying center by roles (e.g., user and influencer) has been suggested by several authors (Nicosia & Wind, 1977a; Webster & Wind, 1972; Wind, 1978). Each buying role may be played by more than one organizational member and a member may play two or more roles simultaneously (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Wind (1978a) examined the empirical boundaries of organizational buying centers for the purchase of scientific and technical information using a sample of 171 manufacturing firms. The study identified, by organizational title (e.g., president), the individuals involved in the decision process and the nature of their involvement. In many cases it was found that the responsibility for the buying decision was shared among two or more people.

Spekman and Stern (1979), using a sample of 20 U.S. firms, representing 11 industries, sought to determine whether the extent of environmental uncertainty was related to the structure of organizational buying groups. Membership in a buying group was determined by asking

the purchasing agent names of other individuals involved in the decision process. The authors found that "... the composite profile of the buying group structure tends to reflect a fairly bureaucratic structure" and that "... the greater the uncertainty and concomitant need for greater information, the more likely it is that the role prescriptions will be relaxed and joint participation in decision making will be emphasized" (Spekman & Stern, 1979, p. 60).

Laczniak (1979) used the Webster and Wind (1972) model to describe and analyze the purchase of a new piece of medical equipment by 11 hospitals. Buying center members were determined in a manner similar to that used by Spekman and Stern (1979). It was found that the buying center encompassed five areas of the hospital: physician-medical, nursing, administration, engineering and purchasing. The average size of the buying center was 5.5 individuals. The physician was most often the influential decider and purchasing agents were found to play a relatively unimportant role in this procurement process.

Bellizzi (1979) identified the influence of purchasing agents and other buyers in the commercial construction industry (a decentralized operation). He examined the buying process and identified roles of individuals at each stage. Buying center members were identified in a pre-study using personal interviews with a small sample. Buying center members were labelled using the following titles: top manager, construction site superintendent, architects and consulting engineers, purchasing agents, co-engineers, shop foremen and other building trade workers.

Fortin and Ritchie (1980) examined the "purchase" of a convention site and its associated services by sending questionnaires

to 506 North American Continent Associations. The buying center concept, influence structure, and the buying process were investigated. After preliminary research they found it relatively easy to identify the buying center as being composed of three groups: elected officers, permanent staff executives and regular members. Fortin and Ritchie noted that "identification and classification of members of the buying center is often more difficult in other organizations" (p. 281).

Gronhaug (1976) investigated the organizational buying of a mini-computer by 48 business and non-business firms in Norway. Using semi-structured interviews in a preliminary investigation, Gronhaug traced individuals involved in this buying situation. Questionnaires were then sent out to 160 buyers. Roles were described as "initiator, decider and influencer" and combined with organizational positions of "top, top and middle, middle and other". It was found that primarily top and middle management personnel played the key role of decider in this procurement process.

Gronhaug (1977), in a similar study, explored the purchasing of a computer by 16 research and consulting organizations in Norway. Seven firms were classified as "market dependent" (consulting or business organizations) and nine as "market independent" (research organizations). The initial contact in determining the buying center was with top managers, chief engineers and controllers. Using semi-structured interviews, Gronhaug found it fairly easy to trace members of the buying center in the market dependent organizations. However, market independent organizations posed more of a problem. As in Gronhaug's (1976) previous study, three roles were identified: initiator, decider and other influencers. It was found in 12 of 16

cases that deciders were from the top level of the organization.

Kelly and Hensel (1973) identified the buying center in 18 firms purchasing an offset press. In examining the search process, it was necessary to interview members of the "decision team" which they defined as:

> "those who performed one or more of the following functions: determined the need for the product; conducted search for information about alternatives; evaluated the information about various alternatives; made the final decision on which brand and model to purchase; and/or approved the purchase. The members of the decision team were identified by using sociometric techniques" (Kelly & Hensel, 1973, p. 212-213).

The Organizational Buying Decision Process

Webster and Wind (1972) suggested that all purchasing decisions start with the identification of a need and end with the selection of a supplier(s). Post-purchase evaluation is an additional stage which is not discussed by Webster and Wind. Each of the five stages described in their process is usually well-defined and identifiable in any buying situation, although some stages may be repeated, omitted or rearranged.

"An acceptable model of a buying decision process should suggest, ... that each of the decision stages, while a necessary stage for the next one ... , may also be a dependent variable in its own right and can be viewed as a legitimate response of the buying center" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 37-38).

The focus of this study is the buying or decision process in reference to the purchase of textiles for public buildings. Specific stages of this process were emphasized: (1) establishing objectives and specifications (focusing on evaluative criteria) and (2) identifying

and evaluating buying alternatives (focusing on information search).

Evaluative Criteria

Organizational goals, personal goals and other influences such as dealing with friends, motivate an individual's behavior in setting or establishing evaluative criteria for organizational buying (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Weigand (1968) interviewed 300 executives in 208 industrial companies in the United States. He found that members of a buying group view product and supplier attributes differently and therefore "studying the purchasing agent is not enough".

Hill and Hillier (1977) explained that price, quality and delivery, used in varying combinations, are criteria used for vendor selection. The authors give general examples of evaluative criteria or attributes set for product and supplier selection and evaluation. Supplier attributes include previous success, stability, quality of products, previous rates of response on quotes, size, location and recommendation by a reliable source. Examples of product attributes include cost, availability and delivery, comformity to specifications, after-sales service, guarantees and reliability. Criteria will differ for various types of organizations, products and situations.

Buckner (1967) found, for British industries, that price was generally the most important factor in purchasing and this was followed by technical specifications. Although price was very significant, buying firms would generally not change suppliers unless the price difference was greater than five percent for the identical product.

White (1978) conducted a study involving purchasing managers in the United States and found that the following product criteria were ranked as important to the purchasing decision: (1) product reliability, (2) ease of maintenance, (3) ease of operation or use, (4) price, (5) technical specification and (6) training time required. Supplier criteria included: (1) confidence in the salesrepresentative, (2) convenience of placing the order, (3) experience with the supplier in analogous situations, (4) financing terms, (5) overall reputation of the supplier, (6) reliability of delivery date promised, (7) sales service expected after date of purchase, (8) supplier's flexibility in adjusting to the buying company's needs, (9) technical service offered, and (10) training offered by the supplier. Preferences of the principal user were also important criteria mentioned. White concluded that criteria established were specific to the product or service being purchased.

Kiser and Rao (1972), in a study comparing industrial firms and hospital purchasers, used a structured questionnaire asking respondents to rank (on a scale of 1 to 7) 60 vendor attributes. They found that "reliability" and "efficiency" were ranked as most important to both types of organizations. "Reliability" encompassed quality, delivery, fairness and honesty, while "efficiency" included handling of rejections, delivery without constant follow up and advising of potential trouble. The next most important criterion was cost. Kiser and Rao suggested that differences did exist as to importance of several attributes between the two types of organizations studied and that the non-commercial sector (hospitals) showed unique buying patterns.

Gronhaug (1977) found that buyers of a computer ranked the following criteria as important to this decision: (1) capacity, (2) certainty, (3) contact with other suppliers, (4) saving or economy and (5) price.

Dempsey (1978) examined vendor attributes considered important by electric utility and electronics companies. Respondents were asked to rate attributes on a scale of 1 to 7. New task and modified rebuy situations for both capital equipment and component material were considered. Dempsey found that delivery, quality, price and repair service were the most important attributes in both buying situations and for product types.

Lehmann and O'Shaughnessy (1974) sent questionnaires to purchasing agents in 19 major U.S. companies and 26 major British companies representing different industries. Respondents were asked to rank 17 product and supplier attributes, given four product categories and related problem areas. The product categories were: (1) routine order products, (2) procedural problem products, (3) performance problem products and (4) political problem products. A semantic differential scale was used to determine the importance of each attribute. Six attributes were found to vary across the four product types. These were financing, technical service, price, training offered, training required and reliability of delivery. The authors suggested that attribute importance varies with the specific product examined.

Information Search

Howard and Sheth (1969) emphasized that search is an important aspect to studying the buying decision process.

The amount of search undertaken depends on such individual factors as the buyer's knowledge and experience, the perceived degree of risk involved and satisfaction with previous purchases. In organizational buying the process is more complex due to group and organizational influences and "a general tendency is to under- rather than over- search" (Hill & Hillier, 1977, p. 104).

In order to market information, services or products (flammability information for example) the marketer must understand the buying process, information sources used by the members of the buying center, and evaluative criteria or specifications set by these members for product or supplier selection. Importance of various types and sources of information used or sought varies with the buying member's role, the stage in the decision process, the buying situation and the product itself (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Hill and Hillier (1977) identified two broad classifications of individuals who provide information to organizations during the procurement process. The first classification "consists of those individuals who provide information which acts as a constraint on the decisions which can be made" ... and therefore can "be considered to constitute a control function" (Hill & Hillier, 1977, p. 64-65). For example, an individual familiar with textile flammability regulations may act as an information source to the buying center. Such sources of information may be internal or external to the buying organization.

The second classification of sources of information are "those individuals who provide background or specialist information" (Hill & Hillier, 1977, p. 65). For example, a consultant may provide information on a continuous or requested basis to the purchasing firm.

Webster (1979) categorized sources of information used in the purchasing process as: (1) Personal-Commercial (salespeople, distributors); (2) Impersonal-Commercial (advertising, catalogues, direct mail); (3) Personal-Non-Commercial (consultants, government agency personnel, employees of other companies); and (4) Impersonal-Non-Commercial (technical journals, government publications) (p. 115). That sources of information may vary widely is shown by the following studies.

Cyert, Simon and Trow (1956), examined the feasibility of using electronic data-processing equipment in a medium sized corporation. They found that alternatives were rarely "given" and that search and information gathering were important aspects of the buying process.

Gronhaug (1977) found that buyers of computers ranked the following information sources as those used most frequently: brochures, contact with several suppliers, bids, advertisements and advice seeking.

Kelly and Hensel (1973), in the examination of an offset press purchase, asked members of the buying center to rate 15 sources of information on their "credibility" and "usefulness". The members were also requested to indicate which sources they had actually used in gathering information. Kelly and Hensel found that: "(1) personal sources are more credible than non-personal sources: non-commercial sources are more credible and useful than commercial sources; (2) non-mass media sources are more credible and useful than mass-media sources" (p. 213). As for sources actually used, "those individuals who searched saw more sources and more frequently than those performing the need and approval functions" (p. 213). When members of

the buying center were asked to rank sources actually seen, as to "helpfulness" and "importance" the following rankings resulted: (1) product demonstration, (2) outside sources, (3) salesmen, (4) trade show, (5) product folder, (6) trade journal, (7) catalogue, and (8) direct mail. Kelly and Hensel suggested, for this specific product, that large firms search for information differently than smaller firms.

Patti (1977) interviewed 92 buyers of machine tools in a number of industries. He asked the individuals involved to rank order five sources of information as to their informative value with regard to new products and services. He found that advertising in industrial trade magazines was most important, followed by salesmen, trade shows, company catalogues and direct mail.

Fearon (1976) conducted interviews with purchasing managers in 30 firms in the United States in order to examine the concept of purchasing research. He stated that "Good purchasing decisions depend on the availability of adequate information-adequate in both quantity and quality" (p. 29). Fearon found that many managers relied on the more traditional information sources such as trade newspapers and magazines, vendor sales and technical personnel, and purchasing personnel in other companies. Potentially productive sources such as trade association personnel, U.S. government personnel and U.S. Department of Interior publications were given very low rankings.

Buckner (1967), in a lengthy study on British industries, found that

> "sales engineers' visits (all types of technical salesmen) are the most important method of obtaining information on products. Manufacturer's catalogues and demonstrations are rated the second most important

> methods. Other methods, such as direct mail, advertisements in the technical press and exhibitions, are favored by some groups but are less important than the others listed" (p. 18).

Factors Affecting the Buying Decision Process

> "The Organizational buying process and the composition of the buying center tend to vary depending on two sets of factors: the buying situation (whether the purchase is new task, a modified rebuy, or straight rebuy) and the idiosyncratic personal, interpersonal, organizational and environmental conditions" (Wind & Thomas, 1980, p. 243).

The last four variables may be explained in terms of their "task" and "non-task" components as related to buying problem (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Since factors affecting the decision process are not the main focus of this study, and since the few empirical studies in this area are not generalizable (Wind & Thomas, 1980) only a brief overview will be given in this section of the review of literature. Wind and Thomas (1980) noted that the focus on choice criteria used by members of the buying center is viewed as "an operational summary measure of the various influences on the buying decision" (p. 248). The focus of this study lies on the decision process - specifically information search (types and sources of information) and evaluative criteria.

The Buying Situation

Webster and Wind (1972) stated that

> "every buying situation can be characterized by three interrelated factors: (1) the newness of the problem and the extent to which the key decision-makers have relevant buying experience; (2) the amount and type of information requirements of the members of the

> buying center; (3) the number of new alternatives considered in the buying decision process" (p. 115).

Buying situations therefore may be classified as new task, straight rebuy and modified rebuy (Robinson, Faris & Wind, 1967).

Nicosia and Wind (1977a) and Wind (1978) suggested that there is a need for empirical research in the buying process to distinguish between buying situations. New task implies more information search and uncertainty than does a straight rebuy situation.

Hill and Hillier (1977) stated that, although price, quality and delivery are often important vendor criteria, the buying situation must be considered.

Brand (1972) found that, for new task buying situations, more senior level members in an organization were involved in the decision-making process.

Doyle, Woodside and Mitchell (1979) studied 14 British industrial manufacturing firms and through personal interviews with senior marketing managers found that the buying center for firms in a straight rebuy situation was small (2 to 3 members). For new task and modified rebuy situations, buying centers averaged three to six members. The authors concluded that the composition of the buying center changes through buying stages for all three buying situations.

White (1978) found, when purchasing managers ranked product and supplier attributes, that no single set of evaluative criteria dominated for product type or buying situation in a purchasing decision. However, he emphasized that it is misleading to think that all purchase decisions are unique. Some consistency in results occurred for the routine order buying situation. "Reliability of

delivery" and "price" were ranked first and second in importance throughout all six product categories (three product types and three buying situations). Other attributes of less importance and consistency were: overall supplier reputation, past experience, ease of operation or use, and ease of maintenance. In any of the remaining buying situations, no consistency prevailed and therefore the product must be carefully considered.

Individual Factors

Although organizational buying implies group decision-making involving several individuals, each person has needs, goals, experience, information and attitudes. Even though all of these individual factors affect the decision process, group and organizational goals also come into play.

Important individual factors include the age of the buying center member, their education, position in the organization, past work experience, attitudes, preferences and exposure to different types and sources of information. For specific studies in the area of individual factors see Wind and Thomas (1980, p. 246).

Interpersonal or Group Factors

As discussed earlier, seldom does one individual alone make an organizational purchase decision. Multiple buying influence or group interaction is of primary concern in this process. The members of the buying center "interact on the basis of their particular roles in the buying process - as influencers, users, deciders, buyers, and gatekeepers ..." (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 35).

The degree of involvement of buying center members varies with the buying situation. In a new task situation we would expect more members to be involved in the decision process and a greater degree of involvement. For specific studies in the area of interpersonal factors see Wind and Thomas (1980, p. 246).

Organizational Factors

The following quote effectively summarizes organizational factors which affect the buying decision:

> "Objectives, policies, procedures, structure, and systems of rewards, authority, status and communication define the formal organization as an entity and significantly influence the buying process at all stages. ... In a given buying situation, the organizational factors that are directly related to the buying task include organizational policies providing specific criteria as to the kind of material to be purchased and specifications for product quality that must be met" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 34).

For specific studies in this area see Wind and Thomas (1980, p. 246).

Environmental Factors

Webster and Wind stated that "The organization itself, its members, and the patterns of interaction among them are all subject to certain environmental influences" (p. 34). Environmental factors include such influences as economic condition, political characteristics of the society, governmental regulation, social and cultural aspects and availability of suppliers.

Governmental regulation is expected to play an important role in this study since flammability regulations affect the choice of products that organizational buyers of textiles for public buildings have. For specific studies on environmental factors see Wind and Thomas (1980, p. 246).

Governmental Standards and Regulations for Textiles Used in Public Buildings

There are a number of mandatory regulations and voluntary standards that pertain to textile products used in public buildings. Minimum safety and serviceability requirements regarding textiles have been established by the provincial and federal governments.

Safety

Canada has had an active test methods and standards development program for many years. With a few exceptions, these have been voluntary standards rather than mandatory, with no requirement that they be adhered to except when tied to government purchases. Until 1971, with the enactment of two amendments to the federal Hazardous Products Act (which focuses on consumer products), there was no major Canadian legislation for textile flammability. This act now provides mandatory regulations for minimum safety standards regarding the sale of textile products in Canada, including carpeting, textile window treatments and upholstery fabrics.

The National Fire Code of Canada (1980), which is currently under revision, consists of minimum fire safety requirements with the intent to promote public safety "through the application of uniform fire safety standards throughout Canada" (p. xv). The intent is to provide municipalities and provinces with a model on which to base their regulations. The Alberta Government is currently working on a new Fire Prevention Act which hopefully will encompass the comprehensiveness of the National Fire Code with regard to textile flammability.

The Alberta Building Code (1981) consists of the National Building Code (1980) with Amendments and was declared in force by Alberta Regulation 128/81 (The Alberta Uniform Building Standards Act). This legislation is more comprehensive than the Fire Prevention Act in that the specifications for flame resistance of carpeting and textile window treatments are established for various areas of public buildings according to the type of occupancy.

Serviceability

Textile Labelling and Advertising Regulations (1980) set out requirements for information on labels for textile products. Care labelling (Can. 2-86.1-M79) is not mandatory in Canada, but if used on textile products, the information must comply with government standards. Voluntary textile serviceability standards are also set out by the Canadian Government Standards Board (Can. 2-4.2-M77).

Problems

Several problems exist with respect to the uniformity of safety standards for textiles used in public buildings. Firstly, there is an overlap of regulations between acts. The new Fire Prevention Act is expected to eliminate some of this overlap since new fire standards will govern maintenance of buildings while building standards govern new construction. Secondly, municipalities and provinces may well have different regulations. Thirdly, different test methods for flame resistance are specified by various acts. Fourthly, there are no regulations for upholstery fabrics except the minimum one covered under the Hazardous Products Act.

Because of the lack of an overall uniform set of regulations, members of the buying center are encountering difficulties within the buying decision process.

Summary

As indicated by the review of literature, there is a growing number of studies in the area of organizational buying behavior. However, no relevant studies were found either on types of information buyers sought or on organizational behavior regarding the buying of textile products for public buildings.

Commercial and non-commercial organizations are growing in size and number resulting in the expansion of the textile market. Knowledge regarding the composition of the buying center, information required and utilized, and factors which affect the relevant decision stages would be beneficial to individuals involved in the textile marketplace.

Flammability and serviceability aspects of textile products are of concern to textile specialists and in practice, organizations have indicated that problems do arise in this particular type of purchase. The extent to which flammability and serviceability aspects of textiles are of importance to organizational buyers is one of the major questions addressed in this study. Information search and influencing factors, with regard to the purchase of textiles used in public buildings, are other concerns.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This section describes the conceptual framework, sample selection and procedure, description of the instruments, preliminary study, and method of data analysis.

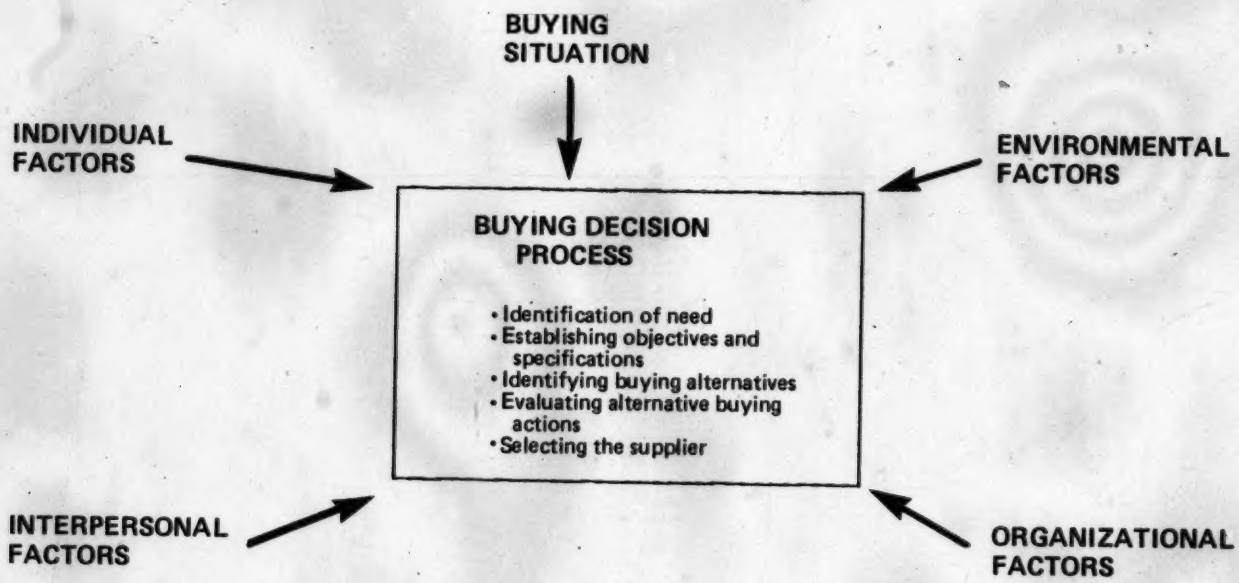
Conceptual Framework

The Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior provides the basic framework for this study (Fig. 1). Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967) first conceptualized buying classes which Webster and Wind incorporated into their model as "buying situations."

The model suggests that purchasing is a complex process, fundamental to all organizations. The following statement by Webster and Wind (1972) effectively summarizes the buying process - a more specific term for the organizational decision process:

> "Buying involves the determination of the need to purchase products or services, communication among those members of the organization who are involved in the purchase or will use the product or service, information seeking activities, the evaluation of alternative purchasing action, and the working out of necessary arrangements with supplying organizations. Organizational buying is therefore a complex process of decision-making and communication, which takes place over time, involving several organizational members and relationships with other firms and institutions. It is much more than the simple act of placing an order with a supplier" (p. 1).

The buying process comprised the main focus for this study. Webster and Wind describe this process using five stages. However, for the purpose of this research, the second stage (i.e.,



Adapted from: Webster and Wind, Organizational Buying Behavior, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.

Figure 1

An Adaptation of the Webster and Wind Model of Organizational Buying Behavior

establishing objectives and specifications) will be termed establishing evaluative criteria (for both product and supplier). Information search, which involves types and sources of information used or sought by individuals during the buying process, is also of interest to the researcher. Although information search may take place during any of the five stages, the majority of search is usually representative of the middle three stages (e.g., establishing objectives and specifications, identifying buying alternatives, and evaluating alternative buying actions). Justification of adapting stages in such a manner comes from the following statement:

> "These are not clearly defined stages but rather steps in a continuous process. Some steps may be repeated several times and there may be much 'recycling' within the basic process, as when new specifications are defined after an initial evaluation of alternatives or when new sources of information are consulted in the evaluation stage" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 33).

Buyers set evaluative criteria and search for information depending on the product, supplier, buying situation and various influencing factors (individual, interpersonal, organizational, or environmental). (Webster & Wind, 1972) All of the preceding variables were examined in reference to the buying process.

Sample Selection and Procedure

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, a small purposive sample of 20 organizations was used. Organizations purchasing textile products for public buildings were categorized into private (commercial) and public (non-commercial) sectors. Seven public and thirteen private organizations were selected. Table I shows the sample categorization.

Table I

Commercial (Private) Organizations	Non-Commercial (Public) Organizations
1. A Development Company	14. A Hospital
2. An Architectural Firm	15. A University
3. An Architectural Firm	16. A Provincial Government Department
4. to 13. Interior Design Firms	17. A Municipal Government Department
	18. A Provincial Government Crown Corporation
	19. A School Board
	20. A School Board

Description of the Instruments

An interview approach was used to collect data for this study. A structured section provided organizational data (Appendix I-A), personal data (Appendix I-B) for each respondent and data on information search (Appendix I-F). More specifically, a description of the organization was asked of a senior member and respondents provided demographic and background information about themselves. Respondents were requested to rank the helpfulness of sources of information listed and to name and rank sources actually used.

A semi-structured interview section was utilized to identify both buying center members and their involvement in specific decision stages (Appendix I-C). As well, this approach to interviewing was used to identify the evaluative criteria set and the importance of each (Appendix I-D). If flammability and certain serviceability aspects were not mentioned by a respondent, the researcher probed for reasons. Respondents were asked to name types of information they found it necessary to search for and to rank these sources (Appendix I-E).

Factors influencing the overall decision process and problems that arose were also discussed during this section of the interview (Appendix I-H, I).

Preliminary Study

A preliminary investigation was conducted with a small sample (three organizations) to: verify the approach to locating and identifying members of the buying center; investigate if evaluative criteria importance is understood and realized; aid in the compilation of lists on types and sources of information; and determine if factors influencing the decision process may easily be categorized.

Analysis of Data

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, as well as the small size of the sample, the analysis is limited to a descriptive one - namely classifications and frequencies on variables studied.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter a description of the sample, organizational summaries, and a descriptive analysis of the variables are presented.

Description of the Sample

The final sample was comprised of 20 organizations located in the Edmonton area. Seven organizations were classed as non-commercial or public and 13 were classed as commercial or private. When the public organizations were grouped as to their nature of business, three were health related, three educational and one was a provincial government office. In classifying the private organizations as to their nature of business, one organization was a construction or development firm, two were architectural firms with interior design departments, and 10 were interior design firms.

The organizations varied in size from one (self-employed) to several hundred in both the commercial and non-commercial sectors.

The product class included carpeting (18 organizations), textile window treatments (14 organizations) and upholstered furnishings (16 organizations).

Twenty-nine individuals were interviewed within the 20 organizations sampled. Sixteen respondents were female and 13 were male. Respondents included nine individuals who were principals of their own design firms, 12 individuals who were senior employees or heads of departments, seven individuals who were staff members and one independent consultant.

Table II shows the years of experience (in the position held when interviewed) for the 29 respondents. The majority of respondents interviewed fall into the highest level of experience, that of 10 years or over. Twenty-seven of 29 respondents had four or more years of experience.

Fifteen of 29 respondents had interior design backgrounds, while four individuals had architectural backgrounds (Table III).

Table II

Frequencies of Respondents' Years of Experience

n = 29

Under 1 year	1
2 to 3 years	1
4 to 9 years	8
10 years and over	19

Table III

Frequencies of Respondents' Education

n = 29

Interior Design Diploma	4
Interior Design Degree	11
Architectural Technology Diploma	3
Architectural Degree	1
Other	10

Twenty-one of 29 respondents belonged to at least one professional organization applicable to their profession.

Organizational Summaries

Tables IVb to IVu contain summaries of the data collected during each interview. Each table represents one organization with the corresponding interviews summarized in each. Table IVa is the key to Tables IVb to IVu describing what information was collected during the interviews and explaining how some of the data were handled. The first column represents data collected about both the organization and the individuals who were interviewed. The second column describes the composition of the buying center and each individual's involvement within it. "Respondents" were individuals who were interviewed; while "others" included individuals involved in the buying center but either not available for interviewing or not considered (by the researcher) to be directly involved with the research topic. The buying situation and product class (carpeting, textile window treatments and upholstered furnishings) were also included in this section.

The third column summarizes the evaluative criteria considered important by each respondent, according to product class. These criteria were categorized by the researcher into serviceability factors, budget, and miscellaneous. Rankings were reported where respondents were able to rank the criteria they named.

The fourth column gives types of information the respondents found it necessary to search for; as well as helpful and actual sources of information.

Table IVa

Key to Organizational Summaries

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Organization name
B. Nature of business
C. Type of business
D. Purchasing structure
E. Number of employees
F. Project

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

A. Title/Position
B. Sex
C. Span of control
D. Years of experience in this type of occupation
E. Years with current organization
F. Highest level of education
G. Professional organizational membership

Each respondent is numbered

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

Respondent description of part played in the decision process, role(s), and stages. "Others" include individuals inappropriate to interview or individuals who were unavailable.

Stages:
A. Identification of need
B. Establishing specifications and scheduling the purchase
C. Identifying buying alternatives
D. Evaluating alternative buying actions
E. Selecting the supplier

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

BUYING SITUATION

New task
Modified rebuy
Straight rebuy

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Responses are numerically coded as for respondent number. Rankings, where applicable, are in parentheses after the corresponding respondent number.

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION

HELPFUL SOURCES
Rankings from 1 to 5

ACTUAL SOURCES
Rankings

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - individual factor
G - group or interpersonal factor
O - organizational factor
E - environmental factor

TIME INVOLVED

Approximate time of involvement for textile selection and purchase

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Specific problems experienced in the selection of textiles for public buildings.

FINE PRINT

Table IVb

Organization 1. Development Company

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Development Company
B. Building Construction
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. Several hundred
F. High rise office tower

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Construction Manager
B. Male
C. Depends on project
D. 8 years
E. 8 years
F. Architectural Technology Diploma
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Is not usually involved with product selection. This was an exception: search for a new window treatment for a high rise office tower
Role(s): influencer (A,B,C,D)
gatekeeper (A,B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Project Manager
Identification of need
Approval
Selection of supplier
#3 Board of Directors
Final approval

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Textile window treatments

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: life expectancy (1st)
durability (1st), style
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance (1st)
Comfort: light control
heat regulation
Aesthetics:
appearance (sophistication)
color
compatability with building design
Budget
Miscellaneous: effectiveness with heating/cooling system
marketability to clients

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Delivery, custom work time, guarantees, technical specifications, tenders

HELPFUL SOURCES
N/A

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Distributors
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Consultants

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern to obtain best product for the investment
G - consultants study comparing several treatments
G - convincing the organization of the decision
O - budget
O - policy to satisfy clients

TIME INVOLVED

3 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Installations on time
Working with open tenders on products

FINE PRINT

Table IVc

Organization 2. Architectural Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Architectural Firm
B. Architecture, Interior Design, Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 54 employees
F. Athletic Club

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Senior interior designer (Associate)
B. Male
C. 7 employees
D. 14 years
E. 2 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC, BOMA

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Budgets, product selection, purchasing methods, ordering, partial approval, design specifications
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Interior designer
Aids senior designer
#3 Client
Identification of need
Approval
Selection of supplier
#4 Board of Directors
Approval
#5 Parent Club
Influences overall design
Final approval

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: toxicity
flame resistance
Durability: durability (2nd)
life expectancy (4th)
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance
soil resistance
soil hiding color
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: unique style/color
appearance retention (2nd)
plain pattern
rich look/quality (5th)
Budget (1st)

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance (4th)
Comfort: light control (1st)
Aesthetics:
appearance retention (2nd)
rich look/quality (3rd)
timeless look
Miscellaneous: minimum space (5th)
low interference with heating
Flammability not mentioned: forgot

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care:
stain resistance (2nd)
cigarette burns (3rd)
Comfort: comfortable fabric
Aesthetics:
appearance retention(1st)
unique look/color (4th)
light, airy (5th)
compatible with overall scheme
rich, luxious, detailed look

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Flammability, toxicity, staining, delivery, availability. Have a library of catalogues but wish larger samples.

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Fellow employees
2. Distributors
3. Trade publications
4. Government agency personnel
5. Textile consultants

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Fellow employees
2. Distributors
3. Trade publications
4. Government agency personnel

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - need to establishing local image for the club
G - interaction with other members of the buying center
O - clientele ("silent" rich)
O - justification to parent club
O - local/Canadian suppliers
E - availability of products
E - regional influence in taste (design)
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

1 year

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Staining
Selection in specialized jobs (eg. hospital textiles)
Reluctance of trades people in accepting specified products
Finding trustworthy dealers
Last minute alternates
Requirements to make each room different
Specifiers often lack expertise in certain product knowledge
Manufacturer's and salespeople slanting information to their advantage

FINE PRINT

Table IVd

Organization 3. Architectural Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Architectural Firm
B. Architecture, Interior Design, Urban Development, Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 250 employees
F. Municipal Government Department

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Senior Interior Designer
B. Female
C. 8 employees
D. 6 years
E. 4 years
F. Interior Design Diploma
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, selection of finishes and furnishings
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#3 Architect
Approval of interior
#4 General Contractor
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: durable (1st)
wearability (4th)
fiber content
weight
style
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: uniqueness (3rd)
color (5th)
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: delivery availability
Maintenance not mentioned: always chooses low maintenance

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: durability (2nd)
style (4th)
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance (3rd)
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color (4th)
texture (4th)
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: delivery availability
Flame resistance not mentioned: not a concern here

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Looked up all evaluative criteria in sample books. Checked on availability and delivery.

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Distributors
4. Direct mail
5. Fellow employees

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Distributors
4. Direct mail
5. Fellow employees

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - past experience and looking at other installations
G - interaction with architect and others
O - interaction with architect and others
O - client
O - budget
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentative

TIME INVOLVED

3 years

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Trying to change choices, especially in large projects
Dye lots and numbers changing
Installations
Client interference

FINE PRINT

Table IVe

Organization 4. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior design, Space planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 10 employees
F. Restaurant

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior designer
B. Male
C. 10 employees
D. 17 years
E. 8 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, selection of finishes & furnishings
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#3 Interior designer
Schematic sketches
#4 General contractor
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: wear life (4th)
durability (4th)
fiber content
style
weight
density
width (seaming)
Maintenance/Care:
staining/soiling
compacting
Comfort: static control
Aesthetics: décor (2nd)
burns
colorfastness
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: guarantee
availability (3rd)

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flame resistance (3rd)
Durability: fiber content
wear life
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance (1st)
soil resistance
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color (1st)
appearance retention
Budget

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Supporting research (testing), what manufacturer has to offer, pile, weight, flame resistance, fading, price, availability in Canada

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Technical journals
2. Catalogues
3. Government publications
4. Trade shows
5. Government agency personnel

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Trade shows
3. Technical journals
4. Government agency personnel

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern for appearance retention & maintenance
I - achievement of good design
I - wish to obtain best product for end use
O - client
O - budget
E - government regulations
E - international travel & trade shows
E - information obtained through seminars & meetings
E - Salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

3.5 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Cannot always believe sales representatives

Completion time shorter for private industry than government projects

FINE PRINT

Table IVf

Organization 5. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 8 employees
F. Retail store

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. None
D. 1 year
E. 1 year
F. Interior Design Degree
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Color schemes, drafting, selection of textiles
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Interior designer (principal)
Space planning
Aids in product selection
#3 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#4 General contractor
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: style (4th)
weight
fiber content (2nd)
wearability
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: appearance/quality (1st)
color (4th)
Budget (2nd)
Flammability not mentioned:
most carpets pass regulations

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Availability (1st)
Price (2nd)
Have a library for criteria information

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Catalogues
3. Distributors
4. Trade shows
5. Fellow employees

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Catalogues
3. Fellow employees

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern to relate design to the space
G - working with fellow employees
O - client
O - budget
E - availability of product
E - government regulations
E - economy
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

2-3 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Discontinued products

Many products are not readily available because firms are not keeping large inventories during poor economic times

FINE PRINT

Table IVg

Organization 6. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 3 employees
F. Government office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. 2 employees
D. 10 years
E. 3 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, product and finishes selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Government (client)
Identification of need
Some minimum specifications
Final approval
#3 Alberta Government Services
Purchasing Department
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: durability
weight
fiber content (2nd)
backing
density
style
Maintenance/Care: soil hiding
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color
Budget (1st)
Flame resistance not mentioned:
all must meet standards

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control, privacy
Aesthetics: uniqueness

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: soil resistance
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: aesthetics
color
appearance retention
Budget
Flame resistance not a concern here

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Delivery, availability, technical specifications

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors
3. Catalogues
4. Trade publications
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Trade publications

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - each project has its own specific requirements
G - theme or character of interior decided between client & designer
G - interaction with others involved
G - approval meetings
O - budget
O - clientele
O - function or end use
O - government (client) jobs are known to have certain expectations
E - government regulations
E - type and flow of traffic
E - Salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

1 year

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Dye lots differ between rolls of carpet
Shrinkage problems after soil resistant finishes or flame resistant finishes which are applied after fabric manufacture
Keeping up-to-date with new products being introduced

FINE PRINT

Table IVh

Organization 7. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 4 employees
F. Office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Male
C. 3 designers
D. 14 years
E. 3 years
F. Architectural Technology Diploma
G. RIDIA, IDC

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, interior design, product selection, project manager
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
buyer (E)
decider (E)

OTHERS
#2 Consultant
Advice on carpet selection
#3 Client
Identification of need
Final approval

BUYING SITUATION

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: wearability (4th)
pile height
weight
style
gauge
installation
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance (4th)
soiling
staining
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color (1st)
texture (1st)
wear paths
Budget (3rd)
Miscellaneous: end use function
guarantees

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control
privacy
Aesthetics: warm appearance
texture
hand
color
neat appearance
Budget
Miscellaneous: availability

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: function
Aesthetics: color
texture
Budget

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Availability, time of delivery, price, technical specifications, local suppliers. Have a library of samples.

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Consultants
3. Distributors
4. Trade shows
5. Trade publications

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Consultant
4. Fellow employees & self experience

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - design concept achieved
O - client & company image
O - function
O - age & taste of client
O - profession of client
O - budget
E - government regulations
E - the market
E - the economy
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

8 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Need to consult others in some uncertain circumstances regarding textiles

Table IVi

Organization 8. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 1 employee
F. Restaurant

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Male
C. None
D. 35 years
E. 8 years
F. Experience in furniture making
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, finishes & furnishings selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#3 General Contractor
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: fiber content
weight
style
wear life
Maintenance/Care:
cigarette burns
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color
pattern
footprints
appearance (atmosphere)
Budget
Flammability not mentioned: all pass regulations

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance replacements when cleaning
Comfort: light control
Aesthetics: atmosphere, style, softness
Budget

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance practicality (food)
Comfort: comfortable fabric
Aesthetics: appearance (richness)
Budget
Miscellaneous: supplier

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Atmosphere created, color scheme, availability, delivery, price, technical specifications

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Distributors
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Trade publications
5. Direct mail

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Distributors

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern with product practicality and maintenance
O - client wishes
O - clientele
O - location
O - budget
O - government regulations
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

12 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Shrinkage & need for retreatment with flame retardant finishes which are put on after fabric manufacture

Table IVj

Organization 9. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 2 employees
F. Government office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Female
C. 1 interior designer
D. 10 years
E. 6 months
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC, IDS

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, product selection, special detailing
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Consultants
Acoustics
#3 Government (client)
Identification of need
Final approval
#4 Alberta Government Services
Purchasing Department
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: -
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance
Comfort: acoustics
light control
Aesthetics: neat appearance
appearance retention
Budget
Miscellaneous:
minimum space taken up
Flammability not mentioned:
always uses flame resistant fabrics

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: durable (1st)
wearability (1st)
fiber content
Maintenance/Care: soil hiding color
ease of servicing
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color (3rd)
Budget

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Needed to search for availability. Obtained durability, price, delivery, fiber content from samples in catalogue library

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Technical journals
2. Catalogues
3. Direct Mail
4. Trade publications
5. Employees of other companies

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Government agency personnel
2. Consultants
3. Yellow pages
4. Catalogues
5. Technical journals

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - look for best product
I - how challenging the project is perceived
I - difficult to change attitudes toward design
G - working with other people involved
G - respect client views
O - client
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

5 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Shrinkage and stretching involved with textiles which are treated for flame resistance

Table IVk

Organization 10. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 5 employees
F. Court House

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Female
C. 2 employees
D. 16 years
E. 6 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC, Design Canada, FIDER

#2 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Female
C. 2 employees
D. 11 years
E. 6 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC, Design Canada, FIDER

*Respondents #1 & 2 were interviewed together

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Interior design, product selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#3 Interior Designer (principal)
Interior design
Product selection
#4 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#5 Architect
Approval
#6 Alberta Government Services
Purchasing Department
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flammability (3rd)
Durability: durable (3rd)
Maintenance/Care:
ease of replacement (3rd)
staining, soiling, low maintenance (3rd)
installation (3rd)
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: "feeling"
appearance
color
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: availability (1st)
guarantee

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flammability
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control
privacy
Aesthetics: appearance
not noticeable
Budget
Miscellaneous: availability

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flammability
Durability: durable
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: appearance
color
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: availability (1st)

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Appearance of different products, warranties, testing on new or unique products, price. Have a library for information on criteria listed.

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Fellow employees
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Government publications
5. Textile consultants

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Fellow employees
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Consultant
5. Government publications

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - awareness concerning new products
I - design aesthetics
C - work with architect to create a compatible interior & exterior
O - client
O - heirarchy in users
O - government policies when doing government projects
E - availability
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentative

TIME INVOLVED

1 year

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Finding comparable alternates when products are not available

Table IV1

Organization 11. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
E. Self employed; no employees
F. Office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Female
C. None
D. 15 years
E. 2 years
F. 3 years of Interior Design
G. RIDIA, IDC

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Interior designer:
Space planning, finishes and product selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#3 General contractor
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety:
Durability: wearability (3rd)
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance (3rd)
Comfort: static control
Aesthetics: pattern (1st)
color (1st)
image
Budget (3rd)
Flame resistance not a concern in this private office space

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance (4th)
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control (2nd)
Aesthetics: compatible with carpet design (1st)
expensive appearance
Budget (3rd)

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety:
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance
Comfort: functional
Aesthetics: appearance (1st)
pattern (2nd)
color (2nd)
compatible with overall scheme

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
End use, availability, manufacturer's recommendations for installation of carpeting, guarantees, suitability of fabric to design of furniture, cost, lightfastness, fiber content

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors
3. Catalogues
4. Direct mail
5. Trade publications

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Catalogues
3. Direct mail

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - designer's concern with selecting best product for the end use (practicality, appearance retention, etc.)
I - want client satisfaction
O - client preferences most important
E - government regulations
E - lighting effects
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

6 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Client usually has problem visualizing what the designer is doing until finished

Products not labelled with technical specifications

Table IVm

Organization 12. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 3 employees
F. Radio station

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer (principal)
B. Female
C. 1
D. 6 years
E. 1 year
F. Interior Design Degree
B. RIDIA

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, selection of finishes & furnishings, custom work
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Interior designer
Advice
#3 Client
Identification of need
Advice
#3 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#4 General contractor
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: durable (2nd)
installation
weight
wear life (2nd)
fiber content
Maintenance/Care: soil hiding color
low maintenance (4th)
stain resistance
Comfort: anti-static (1st)
Aesthetics: color
Budget
Flame resistance not mentioned: forgot, but was important

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: durable
Maintenance/Care: stain resistance
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color (2nd)
texture (3rd)
appearance retention
Budget (1st)
Miscellaneous: supplier

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Guarantees, static control, delivery, availability, reliability of supplier

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors
3. Catalogues
4. Employees of other companies
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - achieving good design
I - relate interior to building
I - look for best product
I - have alternates in mind
G - respect client views & come up with a theme
O - client
O - end use
O - budget
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

4 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Light colors soiling quickly in certain end uses
Fabric losing shape in furnishings
Keeping up with many new products that are available today
Many designers lack textile knowledge necessary in product selection (especially for carpeting)

Table IVn

Organization 13. Interior Design Firm

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Interior Design Firm
B. Interior Design & Space Planning
C. Commercial
D. Tenders
E. 4 employees
F. Office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. None
D. 5 years
E. 1 year
F. Interior Design Degree
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Selection of finishes and furnishings
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)

OTHERS
#2 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#3 General contractor
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: durability (1st)
fiber content (1st)
wear life (1st)
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: static control (4th)
acoustics
Aesthetics: -
Budget (5th)
Miscellaneous: availability
Flame resistance not mentioned: client owns the building
Maintenance: some concern, chooses medium tones

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control
Aesthetics: color
match existing
appearance
Budget

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: durable, wearlife
Maintenance/Care: soil hiding color
staining, low maintenance
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: match existing color

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Have a library for product details. Check with sales representatives for availability

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Distributors
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Fellow employees
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
2. Distributors
3. Fellow employees

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - design aesthetics
O - client
G - working with contractors
E - government regulations
E - salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

3-4 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Thickness of drapery panels may hamper overlapping in use
Working with clients who are narrow minded
Choosing products that are practical for certain end uses

FINE PRINT

Table IVo

Organization 14. Hospital

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Hospital
B. Interior Design & Planning
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 3 employees
F. Hospital facility

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Head of Interior Design (Consultant)
B. Male
C. 2 designers
D. 26 years
E. 3.5 years
F. Interior Design Degree
G. RIDIA, IDC

#2 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. None
D. 9 years
E. 2 years
F. Architectural Technology Diploma
G. Affiliate RIDIA

#3 A. Director of Nursing Planning
B. Female
C. 200
D. 20 years
E. 20 years
F. B.Sc. Nursing
G. AARN, Health Executive Association

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, color schemes, materials & furnishing selections
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
#2 Aids in materials selection, information search, & reviewing tenders for recommendations
Role(s): influencer (B,C,)
#3 Speaks on behalf of nursing, medical & maintenance staff
Role(s): user (A,D)
influencer (A,D)
#4 Voices concerns regarding Housekeeping
Role(s): influencer (B)
#5 Voices concerns regarding Laundry
Role(s): influencer (B)

OTHERS
#6 Interior designer
Aids senior designer
#7 Executive Planning Committee
Final approval
#8 Hospital Project Management Team
Identification of need
Approval
#9 Alberta Government Services
Purchasing Branch
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety:
flame resistance #1, 2, 3
biological properties #1
mobility/stability of patients #3 (4th)
level of cleanliness #3(1st), 4
Durability: sunlight effects
wearability #1, 2, 4
colorfastness #1
weight #1, 2
tuft bind #1
style #1, 2, 4
ease of partial replacement #1, 3
fiber content #1, 2, 4
backing system #1
adhesive strength #1
rolling stock #1, 4
durable #1, 2, 3, 4
Maintenance/Care: staining #1, 2, 3
moisture absorbency #1, 4
ease of maintenance #1,2,3(1st),4
level of cleanliness #3(1st),4
effect of cleaning chemicals #1
odors #3
multi color (soil hiding) #4
Comfort: acoustics #1,4
Aesthetics:
appearance retention #3(5th)
color #2,3
pattern #2
Budget #1,3

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety:
flame resistance #1,2,3
harmless to unstable patients #1
toxicity #2
level of cleanliness #3

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
#1 Needed to search out all products completely (everything mentioned under evaluative criteria)
#2 Flame resistance, color, suppliers, availability, all technical specifications, testing results, shrinkage, cost, maintenance, application, ease of servicing (all things mentioned under evaluative criteria)

HELPFUL SOURCES
#1 1. Catalogues
2. Distributors
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Trade shows
5. Trade publications
#2 1. Catalogues
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Fellow employees
4. Technical journals
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
#1 1. Catalogues
2. Distributors
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Trade shows
5. Trade publications
#2 1. Catalogues
2. Fellow employees
3. Manufacturer's salespeople
4. Distributors
5. Looking at other practical applications

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - desire for best product #1
I - desire to obtain lowest price #1
I - economy of various products #1
I - life expectancy/ replacement #1
I - designer must live with results #1
I - how challenging the project is perceived #1
I - concern for users #1
I - decrease risk by using trial areas & leaving options open until end #1
I - personal values concerning good design #2
G,O-meetings to set up product specifications #1
O - meetings for approval #1,2
G - interaction with fellow employees #2
O,G-interaction with others (e.g., sales reps) #1
O - pressure to stay on budget #1,2
O - location, end use #2
E - government regulations #1,2
E - international travel #1
E - salesrepresentatives #1

FINE PRINT

Table IVo Continued

Organization 14. Hospital

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#4 A. Director Housekeeping Services
B. Female
C. 250 employees
D. 21 years
E. 10 years
F. Housekeeping Services Program
G. National Executive Housekeepers, Canadian Administrative Hospital Association, Alberta Hospital Association

#5 A. Manager - Linen & Laundry Department
B. Male
C. 100 employees
D. 8 years
E. 2 years
F. B.Ec., RIA
G. International Association of Hospital Textile Managers. Canadian & Alberta Association of Institutional Linen Service Managers.

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Durability: wear life #3(3rd)
effect of sunlight #2
fiber content #2
appropriate laundry techniques #5
Maintenance/Care: ease of maintenance #1,2,3(1st),4,5
ease of servicing #1,3,4
dimensional stability #2,4,5
interchangeable #1,3
washable #1,2,4,5
Comfort: light control #1,3(2nd)
privacy (but see out) #1,2
Aesthetics: colorfastness #2,4,5
compatible with overall color scheme #3
appearance retention #3(3rd)
color #1,2,3(5th),4
pattern #1,2
Budget #1,2
Miscellaneous: low interference with heating system #1
minimum space requirements #1

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety:
flame resistance #1,2,3
infectional control #3
Durability:
impervious to moisture #1
durability #1,2,3
wearlife #2,3(4th)
weave #2
fiber content #1,2
location on furnishings #2
effect of stains #2
snagging potential #2

TIME INVOLVED

3.5 years (Phase I)

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Dealing with manufacturers who want to supply custom products for a large project #1
Need to learn a tremendous amount about products #1
Cannot always rely on what sales representatives tell you #1
Decrease problems by using trial areas #2
Shrinkage #3
Autoclaving effect on textiles #3
Weight of full drapes difficult for maintenance people to handle #3
Maintenance people must learn to care for new products #4
Cleaning draperies without dry cleaning or appropriate pressing equipment #5
Using appropriate laundry techniques on special fabrics #5

FINE PRINT

Table IVo Continued

Organization 14. Hospital -

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Maintenance/Care:
- ease of maintenance #1,2,4
- level of cleanliness #3(1st)
- ease of servicing #1,3
- washable #3
- dimensional stability #2,3
- soil resistance #1,4
- soil hiding color #1,3,4

Comfort:
- comfortable fabric #1,3(2nd),4
- fabric providing ease of mobility #1,3(2nd)

Aesthetics:
- home-like atmosphere #1
- appearance retention #3(4th)
- color #3,4
- pattern #2
- texture #4

FINE PRINT

Table IVp

Organization 15. University

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. University
B. Interior Design Dept.
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 3 employees
F. A faculty building

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Design - Head of Department
B. Male
C. 2 employees
D. 25 years
E. 13 years
F. Design Construction & Drafting
G. Construction Specification Canada

#2 A. Associate Dean of Faculty (Planning & Development)
B. Male
C. 16 staff members
D. 15 years
E. 15 years
F. M.Sc.
G. Various agricultural associations

#3 A. Plant Maintenance: Building Services Manager
B. Male
C. 405 employees
D. 31 years
E. 17 years
F. Engineering Technology
G. Various housekeeping & engineering associations

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Interior design, product selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
#2 Faculty concerns
Role(s): influencer (A,D)
user (A,D)
#3 Maintenance concerns
Role(s): influencer (D)

OTHERS
#4,5 Interior designers Identifying buying alternatives
#6 Furnishings Committee Final approval
#7 Purchasing Department Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance #1
Durability: installation #1
weight #1,3
fiber content #1
style #1
durability #1,3
Maintenance/Care:
ease of maintenance #1,2,3
location #2
soil hiding color #3
staining #3
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color #2,3
appearance retention #3
Budget #1

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance #1(3rd)
Durability: fiber content #1(4th)
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: light control #1(5th),2
Aesthetics: color #1(1st),2
Budget #1(2nd)

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flame resistance #2
Durability: vandalism #2
durable #1
fiber content #1,2
Maintenance/Care: cigarette burns #2
Comfort: comfortable fabric #2
Aesthetics: texture #1
color #1,2
Budget #1,2

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
#1 Price, quality (weight etc.), fiber content, flammability

HELPFUL SOURCES
#1 1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors
3. Catalogues
4. Direct mail
5. Trade publications

ACTUAL SOURCES
#1 1. Consultant
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
1. Fellow employees

INFLUENCING FACTORS

#1 I-decrease problems by using trial areas
I-concern for functional design
I-concern with finding the best product
I-concern with life expectancy
I-aesthetics
C-interaction with others involved
O-budget
E-government regulations
E-salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

2 years

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

#1 Buying straight from catalogues
Maintenance
Wear life
Vandalism

FINE PRINT

Table IVq

Organization 16. Provincial Government Department

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Provincial Government Department
B. Interior Design & Planning
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 16+ employees
F. Government office space

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. 12 employees
D. 9 years
E. 5 years
F. Interior Design Diploma
G. RIDIA

#2 A. Interior Designer - Furniture Standards Position
B. Female
C. 1 employee
D. 6 years
E. 1 year
F. Interior Design Diploma
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Development of product specifications, selection of products, interior design
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
#2 Purchasing of stock advance furnishings, advice on selection, matches alternate choices to standard stock in tender bids
Role(s): influencer (B,D,E)

OTHERS
#3 Interior Designer
Space planning
#4 Client
Identification of need
Final approval
#5 Alberta Government Services
Purchasing Department
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: fiber content #1(4th)
weight #1(4th)
style #1
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance #1
Comfort: acoustics #1
Aesthetics: style & pattern #1(2nd)
color #1(2nd)
Budget #1(1st)
Flammability not mentioned: all carpets must meet regulations #1

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flammability #1(5th)
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: appearance #1(3rd)
match overall scheme #1(3rd)
Budget #1(2nd)
Miscellaneous: availability 1(1st)

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flammability #1,2(1st)
Durability: fiber content #1,2
workmanship #1(4th)
durability #1(5th),2
Maintenance/Care: -
Comfort: comfortable fabric #1
Aesthetics: style #1(3rd)
color #1(1st),2(2nd)
appearance #1,2(2nd)
match existing #2(2nd)
Budget #1(2nd),2(5th)
Miscellaneous: wear on clothing #1
long term supply #2

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
#1 Source of supply, appropriate alternatives, custom work. Have a library for criteria mentioned.
#2 Suppliers readily accessible & interested, trendy vs. long term colors, all evaluative criteria mentioned.

HELPFUL SOURCES
#1 1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Catalogues
3. Trade publications
4. Fellow employees
5. Trade shows
#2 1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Distributors
3. Catalogues
4. Trade publications
5. Textile consultants
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
#1 1. Manufacturer's salespeople
2. Catalogues
3. Trade publications
4. Fellow employees
5. Trade shows
#2 N/A

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern for life expectancy #1
I - decrease risk by using test results & other jobs #1, 2
O - budget #1, 2
O - delivery #2
O - long term supply #2
E - availability #1
E - government regulations #1, 2
E - sales representatives #1

TIME INVOLVED

4 years

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Do not always want to use stock furniture #1

Some upholstery fabrics have adverse effects on people's clothing #2

FINE PRINT

Table IVr

Organization 17. Municipal Government Department

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Municipal Government Department
B. Technical Services Department: Architecture, Interior Design & Planning
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 25 employees
F. Health clinic

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior Designer
B. Female
C. None
D. 2 years
E. 1 year
F. Interior Design Degree
G. None

#2 A. Nurse (clinic
B. Female
C. 36
D. 20 years
E. 11 years
F. B.Sc. Nursing
G. AARN

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Interviewed nursing staff for requirements, space planning, materials selection
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
#2 Clinic supervisor
Identification of need
Approval on products
Role(s): influencer (A,B,D)

OTHERS
#3 Administrative Officer
Purchasing Department
Selection of supplier

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: stability of mats #2
level of cleanliness #1,2
flame resistance #1
Durability: weight #1
fiber content #1
style #2
wearability #2
location #2
Maintenance/Care:
low maintenance #1,2
absorbency #2
soiling #2
soil hiding color #2
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: color #1,2
Budget #1
Flammability not mentioned by 2:
smoking not allowed in clinics

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: -
Durability: durable #1(5th)
Maintenance/Care: soiling #1
easily cleaned #1(4th)
low maintenance #2
tight weave (cleanliness) #2
medium color #2
Comfort: comfort #1(3rd),2
Aesthetics: appearance (pilling, soiling, fuzzing) #1(1st)
aesthetic appearance #2
Miscellaneous: functional #1(2nd)
Flammability not mentioned by 1:
important but forgot

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
#1 User needs, information used on other clinics (supporting information), library samples for technical specifications

HELPFUL SOURCES
#1 1. Government publications
2. Trade shows
3. Distributors
4. Fellow employees
5. Catalogues

ACTUAL SOURCES
#1 1. Fellow employees
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Distributors
4. Trade shows
5. Catalogues

INFLUENCING FACTORS

#1 I-concern for user needs
I-restrictions (felt by designers) imposed by developers & architects
E-government regulations are very for health clinics important especially
E-salesrepresentatives

TIME INVOLVED

4 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Must be very careful in meeting government regulations especially for health clinics
Working around architect's choices (e.g., carpeting)

FINE PRINT

Table IVs

Organization 18. Provincial Government Crown Corporation

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. Provincial Government Crown Corporation
B. Senior Citizen, Native & Community Housing
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. Senior citizen lodge

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Interior designer
B. Male
C. Only person in this department
D. 15 years
E. 7 years
F. M.A. Degree
G. NIDIA

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Space planning, interior design
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
decider (B,D,E)

OTHERS
#2 Architects
Influence product selection
#3 Community Group
Identification of need
#4 Project Management Team (Respondent #1 is a member)
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUTATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting
Textile window treatments
Upholstered furnishings

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance
ease of mobility
Durability: weight
wearability
wear life
style
Maintenance/Care:
soil hiding color & tone
Comfort: comfortable feel
Aesthetics: home-like atmosphere
appearance retention

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance (1st)
smoke spread (1st)
Durability: durable
Maintenance/Care: servicing (3rd)
cleaning method (4th)
low maintenance (5th)
Comfort: -
Aesthetics: home-like atmosphere
peaceful, neutral colors
design not overly noticeable
feminine style

UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: durable
Maintenance/Care: soil resistance
low maintenance
ease of maintenance
Comfort: soft, comfortable fabric
Aesthetics: -

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Price (1st), density, backing system, flame rating, inherently flame resistant fabrics, light-fastness, aesthetic appearance, life expectancy

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Consultants
4. Fellow employees
5. Trade shows

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Catalogues
1. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Consultants
4. Fellow employees
5. Trade shows

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - personal past experience
I - influence of the sales representative's personality
I - genuine understanding of users
I - friendly group is inspiring
C - feedback from users
C - interaction with salespeople
O - geriatric considerations
O - all clients equal
E - government regulations

TIME INVOLVED

4 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Alternate products in tenders
Complaints from users

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Table IVt

Organization 19. School Board

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. School Board
B. Maintenance & Construction of Educational Facilities
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 400+ employees
F. Portables

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Supervisor Maintenance & Construction
B. Male
C. 400+
D. 25 years
E. 6 years
F. Engineering
G. None

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Selection of finishes & flooring for new portables and renovations
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
decider (B,D,E)

OTHERS
#2 Area superintendents
Identification of need
#3 Custodial Staff
Maintenance influence
#4 General contractor
Selection of suppliers

BUYING SITUATION

New task

PRODUCT CLASSES

Carpeting

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: -
Durability: backing
fiber content
weight
style
life expectancy
installation
tuft bind (5th)
Maintenance/Care:
serviceability (1st)
maintenance (2nd)
soil hiding color (3rd)
fading (3rd)
Comfort: static control, feel
Aesthetics: color
Budget
Miscellaneous: availability
Flame resistance not mentioned: included in his written specifications

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Stock colors, delivery, price, technical specifications in comparing tenders

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Government publications
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Technical journals
4. Trade shows
5. Catalogues

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Government publications
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Technical journals
4. Trade shows
5. Catalogues

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern to obtain best product at lowest price
I - decrease problems by using trial areas
O - government testing
O - politics within the organization
E - government regulations

TIME INVOLVED

2 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Problems keeping up-to-date with new products & lack of textile knowledge
Jute backing getting wet
Ozite hard to clean & overall soiled appearance
Students vandalizing loop carpeting

Table IVu

Organization 20. School Board

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

A. School Board
B. Design Construction
C. Non-commercial
D. Tenders
E. 18 employees in Design Construction
F. Elementary schools

PERSONAL RESPONDENT DATA

#1 A. Director of Design Construction
B. Male
C. 17 employees
D. 15 years
E. 1 year
F. B.Sc.(Eng.) B.Arch.
G. Royal Architects Association of Canada

BUYING CENTER: COMPOSITION AND INVOLVEMENT

RESPONDENTS
#1 Consulting with architects for product selection in portables and school renovations, selection of suppliers
Role(s): influencer (B,C,D)
gatekeeper (B,C,D)
decider (B,D,E)

OTHERS
#2 Design Architect
Selection
Final decision
#3 Consulting Architect
Selection of suppliers
Final approval

BUYING SITUATION

Carpeting
Textile window treatments

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CARPETING
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: wearability (1st)
durability (1st)
weight
style
tuft bind
backing
installation
Maintenance/Care: maintenance & cleanability (1st)
Comfort: static control
Aesthetics: appearance (4th)
color (4th)
pattern (4th)
appearance retention (4th)
Budget

WINDOW TREATMENTS
Safety: flame resistance
Durability: -
Maintenance/Care: low maintenance
Comfort: light control
acoustics
Aesthetics: color
texture

INFORMATION SEARCH

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Fiber content, flammability, cleaning process involved, wear life, colorfastness, fading

HELPFUL SOURCES
1. Distributors
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Catalogues
4. Trade publications
5. Direct mail

ACTUAL SOURCES
1. Distributors
2. Manufacturer's salespeople
3. Catalogues
4. Trade shows
5. Direct mail

INFLUENCING FACTORS

I - concern with product wear life & vandalism
I - perception of aesthetics
I - product compatible with environment
I - desire to obtain best product for lowest price
G - interaction with others involved
E - government regulations

TIME INVOLVED

2-3 months

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Difficulty in keeping up-to-date with new products
Use trial areas to decrease problems
Students vandalizing loop carpets
Lack of textile knowledge in selection of products

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Factors which respondents felt influenced their textile selections are listed in the fifth column. The researcher categorized these into individual (I), group (G), organizational (O), and environmental (E) factors. Time involved with the project and specific problems that arose are also included.

Since the interview data are completely summarized in table form, only a brief account of some of the unique points and/or commonalities among organizations are given in the following text.

Organization 1 (Table IVb) was noteworthy in that the project and construction managers of the development firm do not normally engage in the selection of textile products for public buildings. Interior design or architectural firms are usually hired to assist them in this process. For a recent large office complex, an interior design firm was hired to study only the feasibility of using several types of window treatments. The construction manager then executed the information search and also had mock-up treatments made by various suppliers in order to compare products. Many evaluative criteria were set but guarantees, cost (calculated over the life span of the product), and marketability to clients were of particular interest.

In organization 2 (Table IVc) the designer had a great deal of influence concerning the selection of textile products, for a private athletic club, although club management reserved the right to final approval. Aesthetics (specifically, appearance retention and a rich quality look) were of importance for all three products discussed due to the exclusiveness of this facility.

Organizations 3, 6, 9 and 16 (Tables IVd, IVg, IVj, IVq) had projects which involved government office space. In comparing

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evaluative criteria only one of three who specified carpeting mentioned safety (specifically flammability). The other two respondents, when questioned, gave the reason that all carpeting must meet government flammability regulations, and therefore they did not think of it as a criterion; one respondent was a principal of an interior design firm, while the other was an interior designer with a provincial government department. Budget was the most important criterion in all three cases, followed by durability and aesthetics. Maintenance was also a concern, although one respondent forgot to mention it but later commented that she always chooses low maintenance carpets for commercial projects.

Three respondents discussed window treatments and two of these mentioned safety while one forgot but said that she always chooses flame retardant fabrics for draperies. Aesthetic factors were very important criteria for window treatments and comfort (specifically light control) was reported in two of the three cases.

For upholstered furnishings, safety was not a concern except for the respondent responsible for purchasing of government standard furniture. Aesthetics however seemed to be the major criterion for this type of product.

The designers for organizations 3, 6 and 9 talked about some interesting factors that influenced the selection of textiles for public buildings. These included: past experience, looking at other installations, realizing that each project has its own special requirements, and how challenging the project is perceived to be.

Organization 5 (Table IVf) was a retail store project; only carpeting was discussed. Safety was not mentioned for carpeting and when questioned the designer responded that most carpets pass government

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regulations. Aesthetics and budget ranked highest for this product. Poor economic conditions in Canada were thought to influence the selection of products since many were not as readily available (lower inventories) and many products were discontinued.

Restaurants were selected by respondents of organizations 4 and 8 for discussion (Table IVe, IVi). The designers had a great deal of influence over the selection of textile products for the project as long as they stayed within the budget. The designer in organization 4 considered flammability a criterion for both product classes (carpeting and upholstered furnishings). The designer in organization 8 did not mention safety for carpeting or upholstered furnishings but did for window treatments. The reason given when questioned regarding the safety in carpeting was that all carpets pass government regulations. Durability and aesthetics (atmosphere and decor) seemed to be the major criteria for carpeting, while maintenance and aesthetics were of concern for window treatments and upholstered furnishings. There was thought given to product practicality in both cases.

In organization 4 the designer often looked for supporting research to compare or evaluate products; he emphasized the fact that sales representatives are very biased toward their products.

In organization 10, a court house project, the designers had considerable influence but did require the architect's approval. Safety (specifically, flammability) was important for all three classes of product. Durability and maintenance were of concern for carpeting and upholstered furnishings but not for window treatments. Availability and budget were mentioned for all three products. Warranties and testing results were interesting types of information that were searched for.

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Private office spaces were the projects discussed in organizations 7, 11 and 13 (Table IVh, IVl, IVn). In organization 7 the designer was concerned with all aspects of the carpeting and employed a carpet consultant to aid in the decision process. In organizations 11 and 13, both designers reported that flammability was not a mentioned criterion because the client owns the building and it is a private office space. Static control was mentioned by one designer since the office had several computers. The designer in organization 7 mentioned that "one's self" is a good source of information because you learn through experience. The designer in organization 11 discussed the fact that a designer may have a great influence in a project because the client sometimes has difficulty in visualizing the end results. This often leaves most of the decisions to the designer. However, the client's preferences must still be considered to avoid dissatisfaction with the end result.

A radio station was the project discussed in organization 12 (Table IVm). Safety was a criterion considered for carpeting but was initially overlooked in discussion. There was a concern by the respondent for durability and maintenance of the floor covering. The respondent was concerned that many designers have problems keeping up-to-date with new products and that there is generally a lack of the textile knowledge required for selecting products such as carpeting.

Organizations 14, 17 and 18 (Table IVo, IVr, IVs) were all health related. The buying center in organization 14 was the largest of the 20 organizations sampled. There was considerable interaction between members in the buying center during many stages of the decision process. One common element, that was apparent in all three

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organizations, was a true concern for the users of the facility. Much effort was expended in determining or fully understanding the needs and requirements of both staff and patients. Another common concern was that of life expectancy for all the textile products which were selected. Respondents for both the hospital and senior citizen lodge searched for supporting information prior to making textile product selections.

The hospital was perceived as a very unique and innovative project by members of the buying center. Extensive criteria for textile products were set by the various members through member interaction and committee meetings for approval of these products. Many new products were considered, some testing was performed, and options were left open as long as possible to ensure that the best selections were made.

Educational facilities were discussed in organizations 15, 19 and 20 (Table IVp, IVt, IVu). The buying center for the university was larger than both school boards and more committee interaction was involved. The respondent for each school board played the roles of influencer, gatekeeper and decider. Vandalism was a problem that was expressed by respondents in all three organizations. Two respondents mentioned that they use trial areas for carpeting to decrease problems that may be encountered. One of the respondents explained that he experiences difficulties in keeping up-to-date with all of the textile products which are currently available, especially when a lack of textile knowledge is evident.

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Descriptive Analysis of Variables

The Buying Center and Buying Situation

The buying center within the commercial (private) sector sample averaged 3.8 members and ranged from three to six members. For the non-commercial (public) sector, the buying center averaged five members and ranged in size from three to nine members.

The buying situation, which was common to all 20 organizations sampled, was that of new task.

Buying Center Roles and Decision Stages

Table V shows frequencies for buying center member classifications using role descriptors and decision stages. It should be noted that a respondent may serve more than one role. The majority of respondents were influencers and gatekeepers and within these roles the following stages were generally applicable: establishing specifications and scheduling the purchase, identifying buying alternatives, and evaluating alternative buying actions.

Although the number of respondents was comparable for the public and private sector, fewer individuals played the gatekeeper role and slightly fewer played influencer roles within the public sector.

Evaluative Criteria

Table VI shows the frequencies of evaluative criteria mentioned when categorized into serviceability, budget and miscellaneous aspects by the researcher. Serviceability aspects of a product refer to safety, durability, maintenance/care, comfort and aesthetic criteria. The most

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Table V

Frequencies: Decision Stages and Roles in the Buying Center

n = 29[a] (14, 15)[b]

Stages	Roles				
	User	Influencer	Buyer	Decider	Gatekeeper
A. Identification of Need	2 (0,2)[b]	4 (1,3)			1 (1,0)
B. Establishing Specifications and Scheduling the Purchase		26 (14,12)		3 (0,3)	21 (14,7)
C. Identifying Buying Alternates		22 (14,8)			21 (14,7)
D. Evaluating Alternative Buying Actions	2 (0,2)	26 (14,12)		3 (0,3)	21 (14,7)
E. Selecting the Supplier		1 (0,1)		3 (0,3)	

[a] Row totals may be more than 29 as a respondent may serve more than one role.
[b] The first number within the brackets refers to commercial organizational members, the second to non-commercial organizational members.

frequently mentioned category for carpeting was durability, followed by maintenance/care, aesthetics, budget, safety, and comfort.

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Table VI

Frequencies of Mentioned Evaluative Criteria[a] for Each Class of Product

	Safety	Durability	Maintenance/ Care	Comfort	Aesthetics	Budget	Miscellaneous
Carpeting n = 25	15	24	23	11	22	19	7
Window Treatments n = 24	15	6	10	15	19	12	8
Upholstered Furnishings n = 23	11	16	19	12	22	13	8

[a]Categorized into serviceability aspects, budget, and miscellaneous criteria.

The most frequently mentioned criterion for window treatments was aesthetics, followed by comfort and safety (of equal value), budget, maintenance/care, and durability.

The most frequently mentioned category for upholstered furnishings was also aesthetics, followed by maintenance/care, durability, budget, comfort and safety.

Table VII shows a comparison between the total responses for evaluative criteria importance and those broken down for private and public organizations. For carpeting, budget was most important to respondents in private organizations, while maintenance was most important to respondents in public organizations. For window treatments,

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Table VII

A Comparison of the Frequency of Evaluative Criteria[a] Mentioned Among the Total Sample, Private and Public Organizations

		Total	Private	Public
Carpeting n=25 (13,12)[b]				
	1st	Durability	Budget	Maintenance
	2nd	Maintenance	Durability, Aesthetics	Durability
	3rd	Aesthetics	Maintenance	Aesthetics
	4th	Budget	Safety	Safety
	5th	Safety	Comfort	Comfort, Budget
	6th	Comfort		
Window Treatments n=24 (14,10)				
	1st	Aesthetics	Comfort, Aesthetics	Aesthetics
	2nd	Comfort, Safety	Safety	Maintenance, Safety
	3rd	Budget	Budget	Durability, Comfort
	4th	Maintenance	Maintenance	Budget
	5th	Durability	Durability	
	6th			
Upholstered Furnishings n=23 (12,11)				
	1st	Aesthetics	Aesthetics	Aesthetics
	2nd	Maintenance	Maintenance	Comfort, Durability Maintenance
	3rd	Durability	Budget	Safety
	4th	Budget	Durability	Budget
	5th	Comfort	Comfort, Safety	
	6th	Safety		

[a] Categorized into serviceability aspects, budget, and miscellaneous criteria by the researcher.

[b] Refers to the type of organization; the first number being private, the second public.

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comfort was more important for respondents in private organizations, while maintenance was more important for respondents in public ones. Budget was less important for respondents in public organizations in this case. Respondents within the private organizations placed more emphasis on budget for upholstered furnishings, while respondents in public organizations seemed to be more concerned with comfort and durability.

Although many respondents found it difficult to rank the criteria they had mentioned for each class of product, the ranked and weighted findings in Table VIII were of interest to the researcher for the purpose of comparison (Table IX). Rankings were weighted to make the values more meaningful.

In Table VIII, for carpeting, the most highly ranked category as indicated by the weighted score was durability, followed by aesthetics, budget, maintenance, safety, and comfort. Interestingly, when comparing weighted scores (Tables VIII) and frequency of mention (Table VII), durability, safety and comfort were of equal importance for carpeting. This comparison is made more obvious in Table IX.

For window treatments, the most highly ranked category was aesthetic factors, followed by maintenance, safety, durability, comfort and budget (Table VIII). Aesthetics and safety were of equal importance when comparing frequency of mention and weighted scores (Table IX).

For upholstered furnishings, the most important category was again aesthetic factors (Table VIII). Aesthetics, durability, comfort and safety were of equal importance when comparing frequency of mention and weighted scores (Table IX).

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Table VIII

Frequencies of Ranked Evaluative Criteria[a] and Weighted Scores for Each Class of Product

Ranking Weight	1st (5)	2nd (4)	3rd (3)	4th (2)	5th (1)	Weighted Scores
Carpeting n=14[b]						
Safety	1	0	1	1	0	10
Durability	6	5	3	8	1	76
Maintenance	4	1	5	2	0	43
Comfort	1	0	0	1	0	7
Aesthetics	5	4	1	5	3	57
Budget	7	1	2	0	2	47
Miscellaneous	2	0	1	0	0	13
Window Treatments n=7						
Safety	2	0	1	1	1	16
Durability	2	0	1	1	0	15
Maintenance	2	0	1	2	1	18
Comfort	1	2	0	0	0	13
Aesthetics	2	1	4	0	1	27
Budget	0	2	1	0	0	11
Miscellaneous	1	0	0	0	1	6
Upholstered Furnishings n=11						
Safety	1	0	1	0	0	8
Maintenance	2	1	0	3	2	22
Durability	2	1	1	1	0	19
Comfort	0	2	1	0	0	11
Aesthetics	5	6	3	4	1	67
Budget	4	1	0	0	1	25
Miscellaneous	2	1	0	0	0	14

[a] Categorized into serviceability aspects, budget, and miscellaneous by the researcher.

[b] A respondent may have ranked more than one criterion in each category, may have tied criteria, and/or may not have ranked up to 5th.

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Table IX

A Comparison of Evaluative Criteria
Between the Total Sample (Frequency of Mention)
and Weighted Scores for Each Class of Product

		Frequency of Mention	Weighted Scores
Carpeting		n = 25	n = 14
	1st	Durability	Durability
	2nd	Maintenance	Aesthetics
	3rd	Aesthetics	Budget
	4th	Budget	Maintenance
	5th	Safety	Safety
	6th	Comfort	Comfort
Window Treatments		n = 24	n = 7
	1st	Aesthetics	Aesthetics
	2nd	Safety	Maintenance
	3rd	Comfort	Safety
	4th	Budget	Durability
	5th	Maintenance	Comfort
	6th	Durability	Budget
Upholstered Furnishings		n = 23	n = 11
	1st	Aesthetics	Aesthetics
	2nd	Maintenance	Budget
	3rd	Durability	Durability
	4th	Budget	Maintenance
	5th	Comfort	Comfort
	6th	Safety	Safety

Types of Information

After respondents were asked which evaluative criteria were important for the appropriate class of product, they were requested to name types of information which required search. Since very few respondents could rank the types of information they mentioned, Table X shows only the frequencies for types of information that were sought by respondents. These were categorized by the researcher into the same categories as were evaluative criteria. The most frequently mentioned

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Table X

Frequencies for Categorized Types of Information for All Classes of Product

n = 23

Safety	18
Durability	21
Maintenance	15
Comfort	14
Aesthetics	19
Budget	19
Miscellaneous	20

type of information which required search referred to durability criteria. This was followed by aesthetic factors and budget (of equal value), safety, maintenance and comfort criteria. No substantial differences were noted between respondents from private and public organizations for types of information sought.

Sources of Information

Table XI shows frequencies for sources of information considered helpful in selecting textile products for public buildings. The five most helpful sources were: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) (4) distributors and trade shows (of equal value), and (5) fellow employees. When this is broken down into private and public organizations, very few substantial differences occur; slightly more

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Table XI

Frequencies of Sources of Information Considered Helpful in Selecting Textile Products for Public Buildings

n = 22[a]

	Ranking					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Catalogues	8	5	6	0	2	21
Manufacturer's Salespeople	9	3	5	0	0	17
Distributors	1	9	4	0	0	14
Trade shows	0	1	0	6	7	14
Fellow employees	1	2	1	4	2	10
Trade publications	0	0	2	4	4	10
Direct mail	0	0	1	3	2	6
Government publications	2	0	1	2	0	5
Technical journals	2	0	1	1	0	4
Textile consultants	0	0	0	0	4	4
Consultants	0	1	1	0	0	2
Employees of other companies	0	0	0	1	1	2
Government agency personnel	0	0	0	1	1	2
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellow pages	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a]One respondent ranked two sources as fifth.

emphasis was placed on government agency personnel and fellow employees by private organization respondents.

Table XII gives frequencies for sources of information actually used in selecting textile products for the specific project discussed during the interview. The five most used sources were: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) fellow employees, (4) distributors, and (5) consultants. Few outstanding differences occurred when these

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Table XII

Frequencies of Sources of Information Actually Used in Selecting Textile Products for the Project Discussed

n = 22[a]

	Ranking					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Catalogues	11	3	1	1	2	18
Manufacturer's Salespeople	4	9	4	0	0	17
Fellow employees	2	3	3	3	1	12
Distributors	2	5	2	1	0	10
Consultants	1	1	3	2	0	7
Trade shows	0	0	0	4	2	6
Trade publications	0	1	3	0	1	5
Direct mail	0	0	1	1	1	3
Government agency personnel	1	0	0	2	0	3
Government publications	1	0	0	0	2	3
Technical journals	0	0	2	0	1	3
Yellow pages	0	0	1	0	0	1
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	0
Employees of other companies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Textile consultants	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a]Not all respondents used five sources.

data were broken down into responses given by respondents within private as opposed to public organizations. Slightly more emphasis was placed on government agency personnel by respondents of private firms when actual sources of information were reported. More respondents within the public organizations reported using trade shows as actual sources of information.

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Frequencies of sources of information, according to general classifications adapted from Webster (1979, p. 115), are shown in Table XIII. The most frequently mentioned classification for helpful sources was the Personal-Commercial category. This classification included manufacturer's salespeople, distributors and trade shows as sources of information. This was followed by Impersonal-Commercial, Personal-Non-Commercial and Impersonal-Non-Commercial. The most frequently named classification for actual sources used for the project discussed was also Personal-Commercial. This was followed by Impersonal-Commercial and Personal-Non-Commercial (of equal value), and by Impersonal-Non-Commercial.

Factors Affecting the Buying Decision Process

Factors which generally influenced the selection of textile products for public buildings were classified as individual, group, organizational and environmental factors (see Table XIV for frequencies). Individual, organizational and environmental factors were all mentioned more often than group factors.

Respondents within public organizations reported an average of twice as many individual factors as did those in private organizations. Although it is difficult to summarize all factors that were mentioned under these four categories, some important examples follow.

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Table XIII

Frequencies of Categorized[a] Information Sources

	Helpful Sources	Actual Sources
Personal-Commercial	n = 22[b]	n = 22[b]
i.e., manufacturer's salespeople distributors trade shows	45	33
Impersonal-Commercial		
i.e., advertising catalogues direct mail telephone yellow pages	27	22
Personal-Non-Commercial		
i.e., consultants textile consultants government agency personnel employees of other companies fellow employees	20	20
Impersonal-Non-Commercial		
i.e., technical journals government publications trade publications	19	11

[a] adapted from Webster, 1979, p. 115.
[b] actual figures may be more than 22 since one respondent tied two sources as fifth and not all respondents used five actual sources.

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Table XIV

Frequencies for Factors[a] Which Influence the Selection of Textile Products for Public Buildings

n = 23

Individual Factors	52
Group or Interpersonal Factors	21
Organizational Factors	51
Environmental Factors	52

[a]Categorized as individual, group or interpersonal, organizational and environmental.

Individual factors included such influences as: concern for the best product, suitable representation of the client's desired image, achievement of good design, uniqueness of each project, awareness of new products, and the reduction of risk in the selection of textiles by using trial areas.

Group or interpersonal factors covered such things as: interaction with other members of the buying center, approval meetings, and interaction with salesrepresentatives.

Organizational factors included budget constraints, the client (needs, preferences), the end use or location, and company policies.

Environmental factors represented government regulations (which usually referred to flammability regulations), availability of products in the marketplace, salesrepresentative's influences, and the economic situation.

Time Involved

Respondents were asked about the length of time they were involved with the project discussed in each interview. The time ranged from two months to four years. When broken down into commercial (private) and non-commercial (public) sectors, the ranges were quite similar: two and one half months to 36 months for commercial organizations and two to 48 months for the non-commercial organizations. However the mean time was 9.2 months for commercial organizations and 18.1 months for non-commercial ones. There seems to be a tendency for non-commercial organizations to be involved longer in their projects.

Specific Problems

When respondents were asked if they could think of any problems that arose when selecting textile products for public buildings, responses varied from supplier and product problems to lack of experience or knowledge with regard to textiles. These data were difficult to categorize because of the variety of responses but the following information is of interest. Five respondents mentioned that they had difficulties in keeping up with all the new products in the marketplace. Three individuals mentioned directly that salespeople often bias information when making presentations to designers. Five respondents said they had difficulties in making textile selections for specialized facilities (e.g., health facilities). Finding comparable alternate products when the original product specified was not available, was a problem also mentioned by three respondents.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings outlined in the previous chapter will be discussed with reference to the objectives of the study and related literature.

The Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior provided the basic framework for this study, with emphasis on the buying decision process. Respondents within the organizations sampled were asked to describe the buying center, evaluative criteria, information search, textile problems and factors which influence the selection of textiles purchased for public buildings.

Buying Center Roles

The first objective was to identify, by title, the individuals in the buying center in each of the organizations and to classify these individuals using role descriptors. By using a prestudy interview approach it was found that identifying the buying center was fairly easy but to describe these individuals by merely using role descriptors was not adequate. To make the individual respondent's position more meaningful and distinguishable from other respondents (who may also play the same role(s)), it was necessary to use organizational titles as well.

The buying center in each of the organizations sampled included at least three members. This validates suggestions by several authors who state that studying only the purchasing agent or purchasing department within an organization is not enough (Cyert, Simon and

Trow, 1956; Harding, 1966; Nicosia and Wind, 1977, 1977(a); Webster and Wind, 1972; Wind, 1978). The buying center within the commercial (private) sector averaged 3.8 members and ranged from three to six members. For the non-commercial (public) sector, the buying center averaged five members and ranged in size from three to nine members.

Buying centers were generally larger for the non-commercial sector, and perhaps this was due to the size and longevity of the project. More joint decision making seemed to take place as the size of the buying center increased. This confirms the study done by Spekman and Stern (1979).

After locating the buying center within each organization, it was relatively easy to assign roles from job descriptors given by respondents. Also, from the pre-study information, it was realized that not all participants in the buying center were appropriate to interview for the objectives set in this study. As in Lazniak's study (1979), it was found that the purchasing agent or purchasing department played a relatively unimportant role in the procurement process. This may be due to the tendering process which is implemented in purchases of this nature; the purchasing structure within all 20 organizations sampled was based on a tendering system. The tendering process involves a person in the buying center (usually the interior designer). This member specifies a product to be purchased and then he, a purchasing agent, construction manager or a person of similar status, calls for tenders on the specified product. Suppliers have a specific time period within which they may bid on the tenders. Selection of bidders is usually made by the person supervising the tenders but generally the advice of the specifier or designer is requested (to check whether the

bid is acceptable for the product tendered or whether it is an acceptable alternate). This tendering approach may or may not give the purchasing agent the opportunity to play the entire role of decider; often it ends up being "paper work."

The majority of respondents were influencers and gatekeepers. However, fewer individuals played the gatekeeper role and slightly fewer played the influencer roles within the public sector than in the private. Perhaps this is due to the design of the instrument (i.e., the respondents were judged as appropriate by the researcher).

Interior designers (15 of 29 respondents) generally have a great deal of influence over the type of textile product purchased for public buildings. As outlined by Webster and Wind (1972), respondents who played the role of influencer had either direct or indirect influence on the buying decision, defined or established evaluative criteria, provided information to evaluate alternatives, and emphasized factors considered important to the decision. Although respondents did not usually play the role of buyer (the buyer usually being the purchasing agent or department) or decider (usually the project manager or client) in this study, designers did play an influential part in convincing other buying center members of their decisions. As well, in formulating very specific product requirements, designers may have forced the buyer or decider to accept a particular bid. "Thus, although the purchasing agent may be the only person with formal authority to sign a buying contract, he may not be the true decider" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 79). Purchasing agents played a relatively unimportant role in this study.

Interior design respondents, especially senior ones, were most often gatekeepers (as well as influencers) who control the flow of

information into the buying center. "Because they actively influence the definition of the feasible set of buying alternatives, they significantly determine the outcome of the purchase decision" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 80). Salesrepresentatives were often mentioned by respondents as also controlling the flow of information. Although they were not members of the buying center (they did not have major, direct involvement), sales representatives did in fact influence designers because much of their information is often the only information available (especially in the form of catalogues or samples).

Decision Stages

The second objective was to clarify the decision stages for each buying situation and to identify, by role(s), which individuals were involved at each stage. As suggested by Webster and Wind (1972), each stage of the decision process was well defined and identifiable. The buying situation did not complicate this matter since all the respondents discussed projects which were categorized as new task.

The decision stages in which the majority of respondents had an involvement were: (1) establishing specifications and scheduling the purchase, (2) identifying buying alternatives, and (3) evaluating alternative buying actions; these respondents generally played influencer or gatekeeper roles. Very few respondents were involved with the identification of need stage since this was usually the client's or user's role. Although clients were often members of the buying center, they were not interviewed. Likewise, for the same reason very few respondents were deciders (again, the client often played this role).

Few of the respondents interviewed were true deciders, although as previously discussed, many respondents (designers) played a very influential part in convincing the actual deciders (not appropriate to this study) regarding the purchase of a specific product.

Evaluative Criteria

The third objective was to determine the evaluative criteria considered important for product selection by the buying center; and more specifically to determine the importance of flammability and serviceability aspects relative to other evaluative criteria.

As indicated in the review of literature (Hill and Hillier, 1977; Kiser and Rao, 1972; Lehmann and O'Shaughnessy, 1974; Webster and Wind, 1972; White, 1978), criteria differ for various types of organizations, products and buying situations. In this study, evaluative criteria, mentioned by respondents for each class of product (carpeting, textile window treatments and upholstered furnishings), were categorized by the researcher into serviceability aspects (safety, durability, maintenance/care, comfort and aesthetics), budget and miscellaneous. The buying situation was that of new task for all 20 organizations sampled.

Carpeting

The most frequently mentioned category for carpeting was durability, followed by maintenance, aesthetics, budget, safety, and comfort. Approximately half of the respondents who discussed carpeting were able to rank the evaluative criteria they named. The remaining respondents felt that all criteria mentioned were of equal importance.

Using weighted scores based on rankings, it was found that the most important category was also durability, followed by aesthetics, budget, maintenance, safety and comfort. Thus the durability, safety and comfort categories were of equal importance when comparing frequency of mention and weighted scores. Perhaps the durability category was such an important criterion for carpeting because of the initial investment.

When the data (frequency of mention) were broken down for private and public organizations, budget was more important to respondents in private organizations, while maintenance was more important to respondents in public organizations.

Maintenance criteria usually covered such aspects as low maintenance requirements, ease of stain removal and level of cleanliness. Interior designers often needed to justify (especially to buying centers in public organizations such as hospitals and educational facilities) the selection of carpeting over other types of flooring materials regarding the criteria mentioned above.

Aesthetic factors were of greater concern to respondents in private firms and perhaps this was due to the "image" that the client wished to portray. Aesthetics were very much dependent on the type of project, although all designers felt aesthetics were important in contributing to an overall effective and pleasing interior.

Budget was most important in private organizations. This may be because the client often had given the designer a specific budget to work with and carpeting was the largest expenditure of the three textile products. Although public organizations also had budget restrictions, they were generally very adequate and not likely to pose problems.

Safety, specifically flame resistance or flammability, was always close to the least important evaluative criterion for carpeting. This may be a reflection of a confusion of government regulations regarding the type of carpeting (according to flame rating) that can be used in certain locations in public buildings. Eight respondents did not mention flammability as a criterion. Four of the eight were under the misconception that all carpeting passed government regulations and therefore could be used anywhere in public buildings. Interestingly, the years of experience of these respondents was not consistent (1, 9, 10 and 35 years) nor was educational background (the first two mentioned above had interior design diplomas, the next an interior design degree and the last, practical experience).

Comfort in carpeting, especially the "feel" was a concern for elementary schools and senior citizen lodges. Static control was only of concern for schools and a few offices. Acoustics was mentioned for three office projects and the hospital.

Window Treatments

The most frequently mentioned category for textile window treatments was aesthetics, followed by comfort and safety (of equal value), budget, maintenance/care, and durability. Approximately one third of the respondents who discussed textile window treatments were able to rank the evaluative criteria they named. Using weighted scores, it was found that the most important category was also aesthetic factors, followed by maintenance/care, safety, durability, comfort, and budget. Only aesthetic factors were of equal importance when comparing frequency of mention and weighted scores. When the total responses for

evaluative criteria set for window treatments were broken down for private and public organizations, comfort (e.g., light control) was more important for respondents in private organizations, while maintenance was more important for respondents in public ones.

Perhaps aesthetics of window treatments was so important to designers because this is the textile product which could be used in the most innovative or creative way. Many types of window treatments are currently available and this type of product can be regarded as a decorative feature, as well as playing a functional role.

Safety, specifically flame resistance or flammability, was of importance for textile window treatments perhaps because of government regulations.

Durability was not generally of great concern for textile window treatments except for organization 1 (a high rise office tower), organization 14 (a hospital), organization 15 (a university faculty), and organization 18 (a senior citizen lodge). This may be a reflection of a desire for a long life expectancy, more frequent maintenance procedures and an expectation of more physical use.

Upholstered Furnishings

The most frequently mentioned category for upholstered furnishings was also aesthetics, followed by maintenance/care, durability, budget, comfort and safety. Approximately half of the respondents who discussed upholstered furnishings were able to rank the evaluative criteria they named. Using weighted scores, it was found that the most important category was again aesthetics, followed by budget, durability, maintenance, comfort, and safety. Aesthetics, durability, comfort, and

safety were of equal importance when comparing frequency of mention and weighted scores.

Perhaps aesthetics are so important to designers because furnishings are a large element in the design process of the interior environment. When data (frequency of mention) were broken down into private and public organizations, respondents within the private organizations placed more emphasis on budget for upholstered furnishings, while respondents in public organizations seemed to be more concerned with comfort and durability.

Practicality of end use in both maintenance/care and durability aspects were mentioned by several respondents in regard to upholstered furnishings. This was especially true for health facilities, senior citizen lodges and restaurants, as well as for office space.

Budget, as suggested by several respondents, was very flexible in regard to upholstered furnishings. If budget cuts were to be made (for textile products), upholstered furnishings was the easiest of the three product classes to make a cut. One way of reducing costs is to order the standard fabrics of the manufacturer.

Safety, specifically flame resistance or flammability, was the least important category for upholstered furnishings except for respondents in the public organization category. This is perhaps because there are presently no mandatory government regulations as to the flammability of upholstered furnishings for public buildings, except minimum standards set out by The Hazardous Products Act regarding the sale of fabrics in Canada. Although safety criteria were least important, several respondents did mention flammability of upholstered furnishings as something that should be considered. This was especially

true for upholstery selections in projects such as hospitals, senior citizen lodges, restaurants and educational facilities. This may also account for the fact that the public organization sector were more concerned with safety than others.

Types of Information

The fourth objective was to determine what types of information the buying center sought most often for each class of product and buying situation, and the importance of each type.

The buying situation was that of new task for all 20 organizations sampled. All respondents generalized types of information, consequently all three products were covered simultaneously. Very few respondents were able to rank the types of information they thought required search on their part. Therefore types of information which required search were categorized into the same categories as evaluative criteria since the two seem to go hand in hand.

The most frequently mentioned type of information which required search referred to durability criteria (i.e., fiber content, wearability, fabric weight, density). This is understandable since some textile knowledge would be beneficial in this particular area of specifications. Durability was followed by aesthetic factors (e.g., colors, lightfastness, appearance retention) and budget (of equal value), safety (e.g., flame resistance, toxicity), maintenance/care (e.g., staining, shrinkage, ease of servicing) and comfort (e.g., static control.

Information search was generally conducted through catalogues (discussed under sources of information). Each respondent had, or had

easy access to, sample libraries which correspond to their requirements. These are usually kept up-to-date by sales representatives.

Sources of Information

The fifth objective was to determine sources of information the buying center considered most helpful and also which sources were actually used in selecting textile products in each buying situation.

When members of the buying center were asked to rank sources of information "helpful" in the selection of textile products for public buildings the following rankings resulted: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) (4) distributors and trade shows (of equal value) and (5) fellow employees.

When members of the buying center were asked to name and rank sources of information actually used in the selection of textile products for the projects under study the rankings were quite similar: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) fellow employees, (4) distributors and (5) consultants.

Importance of various sources of information used or sought varies with the process, the buying situation (in this study, new task) and the product itself (Webster & Wind, 1972). Buckner (1967, Fearn (1976), Gronhaug (1977), Kelly and Hensel (1973), and Patti (1977) also state that information sources sought vary with the product. Since the buying situation was always that of new task and the products were not differentiated for sources of information in this study, the above findings cannot be supported.

With the increasing availability of textile products for commercial use, it is understandable that interior designers and others

working in this field have libraries of catalogue samples. Since available products may change quite frequently, reliance on the salespeople and distributors becomes inevitable. Selecting textile products for interiors is only a part of the designer's responsibility, and as several respondents mentioned, keeping up-to-date with all the information on available products becomes an awesome task; especially when designers often possess very little technical textile knowledge. They must rely on the word of the salesperson, who is often judged to be very biased toward his product. Learning from trade shows (which allows a convenient means of comparing products) and use of consultants seems to ease some of the uncertainty with regard to textile selections. Consultants are effectively described by Hill and Hillier (1977) as "those individuals who provide background or specialist information" (p. 65).

Textile consultants were not commonly utilized according to the findings of this study. Discussion with several respondents indicated that designers are generally unaware of this type of service. Interestingly, personnel of other design companies were also not utilized very often. Perhaps this is due to the competitiveness of the profession.

When the sources of information were categorized according to Webster and Wind's (1979, p. 115) classifications it was found that the most helpful and most used category was that of Personal-Commercial, followed by Impersonal-Commercial, Personal-Non-Commercial, and Impersonal-Non-Commercial. Selection of personal over non-personal sources lends support to Kelly and Hensel's (1973) study of offset press purchases. Such traditional sources confirm Fearon's (1976) study.

Factors Affecting the Buying Decision Process

The sixth objective was to determine what factors influenced search behavior, specifically the evaluative criteria considered important, and to categorize these as organizational, environmental, interpersonal (group), or individual influences. The buying situation also affects the decision process (Webster & Wind, 1972). In this study, the buying situation was that of new task. Many respondents discussed the facts that the "newness" or "how challenging the project was perceived", along with "their experience", influenced the decision process in terms of the amount of effort and search that was conducted.

According to a study by Brand (1972), a greater number of senior level members in an organization were involved in the decision process. The findings of this study lend support to this statement since many respondents were principals of their own firms or senior members within the organization.

Buying centers ranged in size from three to nine members which lends support to the study done by Doyle, Woodside and Mitchell (1979) who found, for new task buying situations, that buying centers averaged three to six members.

The factors which seemed to influence most strongly the selection of textile products for public buildings in this study were individual, organizational and environmental factors. Of particular interest was the fact that nearly every respondent mentioned government regulations as affecting the selection of textile products which could be made for public buildings. Marketing efforts by salesrepresentatives were also another important environmental influence affecting decisions made by members of the buying center.

Specific Problems

Objective 7 was to determine specific problems that arose when selecting textile products for public buildings. The variety of responses made these data difficult to categorize. However, several categories of responses were of interest to this study. These included: keeping up with new textile products in the marketplace, interpreting sales-representatives' information which is often biased, making textile selections for specialized projects such as hospitals, and finding comparable or equal products when products originally selected are not available.

Several respondents discussed the fact that selecting textile products for commercial use is becoming a more and more difficult task for interior designers and architects. Textile information is only a minimal part of their education and with the number of advanced products on the market it is understandable that people involved in the decision process have problems with textile selection.

Several respondents, when questioned about sources of information used in this procurement process, mentioned that they would utilize the services provided by a textile consultant if they knew of one.

Some problems were reduced through discussions at professional association meetings (21 of 29 respondents belonged to some professional organization) and also through personal experience.

One problem which was not directly mentioned was that of difficulty in interpretation of government regulations. Perhaps if this question had been specifically addressed, responses may have resulted. It should be noted that government regulations were stated by many respondents under factors which influence the selection of textile

products for public buildings. It should be noted that several respondents were confused or under misconceptions regarding flammability regulations for textiles used in public buildings.

Several respondents mentioned that problems decrease with experience and that use of trial installations (time permitting) also tends to minimize unwise selections.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest that several individuals are involved in the buying decision process and that members of the buying center play various roles at different stages. These findings lend support to the Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior. Other researchers' suggestions with respect to studying the buying process (Cyert, Simon & Trow, 1956; Harding, 1966; Nicosia & Wind, 1977, 1977(a); Webster & Wind, 1972; Wind, 1978) were also supported.

The buying center varied in size according to the organization; larger, more lengthy projects generally tended to involve more people. Members of the buying center usually played influencer and gatekeeper roles during the following decision stages: establishing specifications and scheduling the purchase, identifying buying alternates and evaluating alternative buying actions. Interior design respondents, although they did not often play the role of decider, were frequently very influential in convincing the decider.

Evaluative criteria, set by members of the buying center, were specific to the product. For carpeting, durability, maintenance and aesthetics were of primary importance. For window treatments, concerns were for aesthetics, comfort and safety. For upholstered furnishings, aesthetics, maintenance and durability were considered paramount.

The buying situation was always that of new task for this study. This suggested that buying center members must conduct a widespread search with regard to the criteria set for each product. Durability

information was searched for most often, followed by aesthetic information, price (budget), safety, maintenance and comfort. Safety was not an important evaluative criterion except for window treatments, and the information search reflects this.

Catalogues, manufacturer's salespeople, distributors, trade shows and fellow employees are the sources of information which were thought to be the most helpful (and used) in the overall search process. These may generally be grouped as Personal-Commercial sources.

The factors which most influence the selection of textile products for public buildings were individual, organizational and environmental factors.

The time that buying center members were involved with a project varied for each organization; public organizations averaged twice the length of involvement as private ones.

Problems that arose when selecting textile products for public buildings varied considerably. Problems that were of interest to this study were: staying abreast of the increasing number and variety of textile products on the market, selecting textiles for specialized facilities, recognizing comparable alternatives to unavailable products, and analyzing the often biased information from sales representatives. The above mentioned problems were often said to be due to a lack of technical knowledge with regard to commercial textile products. Members of the buying center discussed government regulations as a factor which influences their selections, yet did not mention these as a problem. Safety, regulated by government legislation, was not high in importance for information search; yet many respondents were under misconceptions regarding textile flammability and interpretation of textile safety regulations.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine buying decisions made in organizations which purchase textile products (carpeting, textile window treatments and upholstered furnishings) for use in public buildings.

The Webster and Wind (1972) model of organizational buying behavior provided the basic framework for this research. The decision process comprised the main focus of study with emphasis on evaluative criteria and information search.

A purposive sample of 20 organizations was selected; of the 20, seven were public or non-commercial and 13 were private or commercial organizations. The size of organization varied from one to several hundred employees. Carpeting was discussed in 18 of the 20 organizations, window treatments in 14, and upholstered furnishings in 16. The buying situation in all 20 organizations was that of new task. Within the sample, 29 respondents were interviewed.

The buying center averaged 3.8 members for private organizations (ranged from three to six members) and five members for public organizations (ranged from five to nine members). The majority of members in the buying centers played influencer and gatekeeper roles and although they were not actual deciders, these members were influential in convincing the deciders. Buyers (purchasing agents or departments) played a relatively unimportant role in this procurement process.

The majority of respondents were involved in the following

stages of the buying decision process: (1) establishing specifications and scheduling the purchase, (2) identifying buying alternatives and (3) evaluating alternative buying actions. The public and private firms exhibited similarities in their involvement.

Evaluative criteria set by members of the buying center were specific to the product discussed. These were categorized by the researcher into serviceability aspects, budget and miscellaneous. The criteria were analyzed in two ways by the researcher. For frequency of mention analysis, the following order of criteria resulted for carpeting: (1) durability, (2) maintenance, (3) aesthetics, (4) budget, (5) safety and (6) comfort. For window treatments the criteria, in order of importance, were: (1) aesthetics, (2) comfort and safety (of equal value), (3) budget, (4) maintenance and (5) durability. Criteria for upholstered furnishings were: (1) aesthetics, (2) maintenance, (3) durability, (4) budget, (5) comfort and (6) safety.

When evaluative criteria were broken down for public and private organizations, a few differences occurred. For carpeting, budget was more important to private organizational members while maintenance was more important to public members. For window treatments, comfort was more important to private organizational members and maintenance more so to public members. Budget was less important to public respondents than private. For upholstered furnishings, budget was more important to private organizations; while more emphasis was placed on comfort and durability by respondents within public organizations.

Evaluative criteria were ranked by several respondents. For carpeting, the following criteria rankings resulted: (1) durability, (2) aesthetics, (3) budget, (4) maintenance, (5) safety and (6) comfort.

For window treatments, criteria rankings were: (1) aesthetics, (2) maintenance, (3) safety, (4) durability, (5) comfort and (6) budget. Rankings for upholstered furnishings were: (1) aesthetics, (2) budget, (3) durability, (4) maintenance, (5) comfort and (6) safety.

Types of information sought by respondents were: (1) durability criteria, (2) aesthetics, (3) budget, (4) safety, (5) maintenance and (6) comfort. No substantial differences occurred between private and public organizations on this issue.

Sources of information considered most helpful by members of the buying center were: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) distributors and trade shows (of equal value), and (4) fellow employees. The actual sources used were ranked as follows: (1) catalogues, (2) manufacturer's salespeople, (3) fellow employees, (4) distributors and (5) consultants. The most important sources would be classified as personal-commercial according to Webster (1979). No substantial differences occurred between private and public organizations in this instance.

Factors which influenced the selection of textile products for use in public buildings were mainly individual, organizational and environmental factors. Public organizational members named an average of twice as many individual factors as did private sector members. Of particular interest to this study were environmental factors; government regulations did play an important part, as did marketing efforts of sales representatives, in influencing the selection of textile products for public buildings.

The average time of involvement for projects discussed during

the interviews differed between public and private organizations. Although the range of time involved was similar, the average or mean time was twice as long for public as it was for private organizations.

When asked about specific problems that arose when selecting textile products for public buildings, several respondents expressed the following types of problems: keeping up-to-date with all the new textile products being marketed, a lack of experience or technical knowledge regarding textiles, filtering biased information from sales-representatives, choosing textiles for specialized areas such as hospitals, and finding comparable alternatives when a selected product became unavailable.

Recommendations for Further Research

Since this study was exploratory in nature, objectives were used; hypotheses may now be established. A more structured instrument could be used with a larger sample to test hypotheses. Based on the findings of this study the following hypotheses should be considered:

1. No significant association exists between the composition of the buying center and the type of organization.

The buying centers within the sample used for this study varied between public and private organizations.

2. No significant association exists between the type of organization and
    a. the types of information sought
    b. the sources of information used, or
    c. the importance of evaluative criteria set.

Although no substantial differences were found between public and private organizations in this study with regard to information search, perhaps this was due to the design of the interview questions. However, differences between types of organizations did occur for evaluative criteria.

3. No significant association exists between the type of influencing factor (i.e., organizational, environmental, interpersonal, or individual) and
    a. the types of information sought
    b. the sources of information used
    c. importance of evaluative criteria set, or
    d. type of organization.

The findings of this study suggest that influencing factors may depend on the type of organization (public versus private).

The following hypotheses, although they were not supported by the findings of this study, may still be worthy of consideration for further research:

1. No significant association exists between the buying situation and
    a. the types of information sought
    b. the sources of information used, or
    c. importance of the evaluative criteria set.
2. No significant association exists between a respondent's educational background and
    a. the types of information sought
    b. the sources of information used, or
    c. the importance of evaluative criteria set.

3. No significant association exists between a respondent's years of experience and

   a. the types of information sought

   b. the sources of information used, or

   c. the importance of evaluative criteria set.

The final product choice was not included in this study. All stages of the organizational decision process could be examined in future studies.

Recommendations for Private Industry

As indicated by the findings of this study, sales-representatives are a key marketing resource (through their presentations and catalogues) to individuals involved with the procurement of textile products for organizations. Since the buying center changes from organization to organization, salespeople must recognize the composition of the buying center in each buying situation; they must also be able to identify specific individuals who are influential to the selection process and approach these people.

Certain members of the buying center require specific information regarding the criteria set for each product and the sales-representatives must be able to supply this information. Manufacturers could make an effort to better educate their sales personnel to provide both appropriate and adequate information to the individuals responsible for selecting textiles for commercial use. Catalogues should be as informative as possible, especially for the individuals writing specifications and searching for products that meet these criteria.

Textile specialists may play an important role in educating both salesrepresentatives and individuals involved with the textile buying process. They can also provide a consultative service to those individuals who are uncertain regarding textile selections, especially for specialized projects such as hospitals and senior citizen housing. With the large number of textile products produced for today's market it is inevitable that designers and others involved in the selection of textiles for commercial use may and do experience difficulties. People are beginning to realize that one cannot be a specialist in all aspects of a career; they must specialize in smaller areas. Textile consultants may provide some of the specialized information required by members of the buying center.

Recommendations for Government

From the findings of this study, it is evident that many individuals involved in the selection of textiles for public buildings do not understand the flammability regulations set out by the government. These individuals may not always realize their own lack of understanding.

With various safety regulations in existence in Alberta, designers sometimes select flame resistant fabrics for commercial use simply to avoid any risk or uncertainty in meeting requirements. Others are misinformed about a product's ability to meet flammability regulations. There may also be a need for a program to educate the appropriate decision makers who select and purchase textile products for use in public buildings.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

NAME OF ORGANIZATION _____

LOCATION _____

NATURE OF BUSINESS _____

TYPE OF BUSINESS
(COMMERCIAL OR NON-COMMERCIAL) _____

PURCHASING STRUCTURE _____

SIZE (NO. OF EMPLOYEES) _____

PROJECT _____

B. PERSONAL DATA

NAME _____

SEX _____

POSITION IN THE ORGANIZATION _____

SPAN OF CONTROL _____

YEARS EXPERIENCE
(in this type of occupation) _____

YEARS WITH CURRENT ORGANIZATION _____

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION _____

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP _____

C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

THE BUYING CENTER

1. How would you describe your involvement in the buying process?

(Interviewer check appropriate role(s):
influencer ___, user ___, gatekeeper ___, decider ___, buyer ___)

2. Are other individuals involved in this process?

Probe:

a. Who (name/title) initiated this project?

b. Were other people asked for advice? Who?

c. Who controls the flow of pertinent information to members involved in the buying process (e.g., information about new products)?

d. Who sets up specifications to be met by product or supplier?

e. Who searches for information about the product (e.g., alternatives that are available)?

f. Who makes the final decision?

Page 117 has been removed due to lack of availability of copyright permission. It describes a chart on decision stages and roles in the buying center. This material may be found in:

Webster, Frederick E. Jr. and Wind, Yoram
Organizational Buying Behavior, Prentice Hall, 1974, p. 80.

D. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

BUYING SITUATION _____

PRODUCT(S) _____

1. What concerns, criteria or specifications were set for the product or supplier.

CARPETING WINDOW TREATMENTS UPHOLSTERED FURNISHINGS

2. Rank the 5 most important.
3. If flammability or serviceability aspect were not mentioned, ask for reasons.

E. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INFORMATION SEARCH

1. After setting criteria or specifications for the product or supplier, what types of information did you find it necessary to search for?

2. Rank the 5 most important.

3. What types of information were you familiar enough with that no search was necessary?

F. STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

From the following list of sources of information, rank (from 1 to 5) the sources you consider to be the most helpful in any buying situation or product class.

Distributors _____

Manufacturer's salespeople _____

Advertising (radio, newspaper, brochure) _____

Catalogues _____

Direct mail _____

Trade publications _____

Telephone yellow pages _____

Consultants _____

Textile consultants _____

Government agency personnel _____

Employees of other companies _____

Fellow employees _____

Technical journals _____

Government publications _____

Trade shows _____

G. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. Name the sources you actually used.

2. Rank these according to the 5 most helpful.

H. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INFLUENCING FACTORS

You mentioned that ... (factors mentioned during the course of the interview) affects the selection of textiles that you make. What other factors influence the specifications or selections that are made for textiles which are used in public buildings?

I. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. What is the approximate length of time involved in this buying process?

2. Can you think of any specific problems that arise when selecting textiles for public buildings?